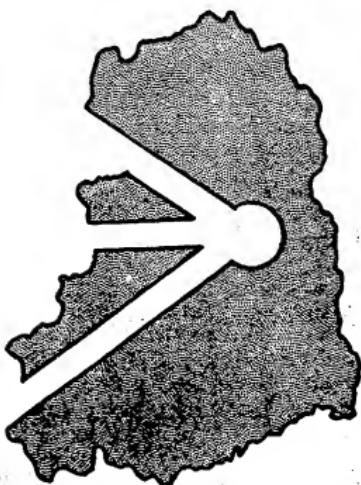


UNITED STATES  
AIR ACCESS TO BERLIN

1945-1965



PART 1

POLITICAL-MILITARY  
BACKGROUND

HISTORICAL DIVISION

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

UNITED STATES AIR FORCES IN EUROPE

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1945 - 1965

PART I

THE POLITICAL-MILITARY BACKGROUND

BY

ROYCE E. ECKWRIGHT  
COMMAND HISTORIAN

HISTORICAL DIVISION  
OFFICE OF INFORMATION  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCES IN EUROPE  
1 September 1966

## PREFACE

This volume is the first of a projected three volume study of a prime United States Air Forces in Europe mission in the years 1945 to 1965 - the maintenance of air access to Berlin. In its entirety, this study will replace and supplement an earlier monograph published in 1959 at Air Staff request, USAFE Contingency Planning for Berlin. Continuous utilization of the original study at all levels exhausted the Historical Division stock and indicated a need for revision and updating of this material.

Volume II of the revised study will discuss air access operational factors and experience in the two decades following World War II. Berlin contingency planning and policies will be taken up in Volume III.

The brief survey of Berlin's political-military significance in this first volume necessarily drew upon many sources other than the official Air Force historical record and it has no authoritative pretensions. Its sole purpose is to provide background data repeatedly requested by staff briefers and planners. It should not be interpreted as reflecting the policies or views of the United States government or the United States Air Force.

Like all Air Force historical studies, this volume is subject to revision on the basis of information which may later become available, and suggestions or corrections will be welcomed.

The assistance and support of Colonel Arthur Dreyer, USAFE Director of Information, made publication of this revised study possible, and is gratefully acknowledged. Editorial production was accomplished by Miss Eunice Fuller and Mrs. Robert Williams.

*Royce Eckwright*  
ROYCE E. ECKWRIGHT  
DAFC  
Chief, Historical Division, OI

## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>CHRONOLOGY</b>	ix
<b>I. THE POLITICAL-MILITARY BACKGROUND</b>	
<b>A. THE WESTERN STAKE IN BERLIN</b>	1
<b>B. BERLIN NEGOTIATIONS AND AGREEMENTS</b>	4
1. Wartime Three Power Agreements	4
2. Early Postwar Accords	8
3. Unilateral Negotiations and Accords	12
<b>C. THE BERLIN CRISES</b>	16
1. Early Quadripartite Status Destruction	16
2. The Berlin Blockade Crisis of 1948-1949	21
Prelude	21
Airlift Decisions and Planning	23
Airlift Operations	26
Soviet Interference Efforts	28
Diplomatic Negotiations	30
3. The Soviet Ultimatum of 1958	32
Diplomatic Background	32
Access Implications	36
4. The Berlin Crisis in 1961	37
The Soviet Ultimatum	37
US Armed Forces Augmentation	40
US Command Arrangements in Berlin	41
Access Implications	43
<b>D. THE CRUCIAL NATURE OF AIR ACCESS</b>	44
1. The Wartime Decisions	44
2. The Berlin Blockade Lessons	45
3. Implications of Soviet Access Harassment	47
<b>FOOTNOTES</b>	51
<b>GLOSSARY</b>	59

## ILLUSTRATIONS

### Figure

### Opposite Page

1	Map, Occupied Germany 1948 - 1949	1
2	Map, Berlin Sectors	16
3	Map, Greater Berlin	22
4	Chart, Berlin Airlift Tonnages	28
5	Chart, Soviet Harassment	29

## CHRONOLOGY

1944 - 1965

### 1944

12 Sep 44      Based on agreements reached by the European Advisory Committee (EAC) headed by Ambassador John G. Winant of the United States, Lord Strang of Great Britain and F. T. Husev of the Soviet Union, the Big Three Foreign Ministers sign the London Protocol stipulating a tri-zonal occupation of Germany with Greater Berlin as a separate area to be occupied and administered by all three powers. Western access rights to Berlin are not mentioned.

14 Nov 44      The EAC agrees on the German Occupation Zone and Berlin Sector boundaries, and on three implementing directives to be issued following the defeat of Germany.

### 1945

Feb 45      The EAC London accords are confirmed by the Yalta Conference, together with provisions for a French Zone of Occupation in Germany to come from the areas assigned to the United States and Great Britain.

2 May 45      German forces in Berlin capitulate to the Soviet armies.

22 May 45      The formal declaration of Germany's defeat and the EAC Occupation Zone accords are approved by the four Allied Powers.

5 Jun 45      The Four Power Commanders in Chief in Berlin issue the approved EAC documents declaring the defeat of Germany, their assumption of supreme authority in their respective Occupation Zones with an Allied Control Council established for Germany as a whole, and the Zonal and Berlin Sector occupation boundaries.

14 Jun 45      President Truman in a letter to Soviet Premier Stalin raises the question of right of access to Berlin.

18 Jun 45      Stalin replies to President Truman's letter of 14 June that "on our part all necessary measures will be taken in Germany . . . in accordance with the above plan."

29 Jun 45      The question of Western Power access to Berlin is raised at a meeting between General Lucius D. Clay, Marshal G. Zhukov and British representatives.

4 Jul 45      American and British troops occupy their respective Sectors of Berlin.

7 Jul 45      The Allied Military Kommandatura is established in Berlin by the Occupying Powers to exercise overall responsibility for Berlin on a unanimous vote basis.

17 Jul 45      The Big Three heads of state meet at Potsdam to discuss a provisional status for Germany, and Berlin is explicitly recognized as the capital of Germany.

12 Aug 45      French troops march into Berlin to occupy a sector carved from the American and British Sectors.

30 Nov 45 The Allied Control Council approves Coordinating Committee proposals (CONL/M (45) (13) establishing three 20 mile-wide air corridors from Hamburg, Buckeburg (Hannover), and Frankfurt-am-Main to Berlin with flights in these corridors to "be conducted without previous notice being given by aircraft of the nations governing Germany."

Dec 45 A plan for establishing a BASC to operate as a "central organization under a coordinated control established by representatives of the USSR, USA, Great Britain and France for unified control over flights by all aircraft in the zone of the Control Center." (DAIR/P (45) (67) (Second Revision) is forwarded to the Allied Control Council Coordinating Committee by the Air Directorate.

18 Dec 45 The Air Directorate approves a paper (DAIR/P (45) (71), "Flight Rules for Aircraft Flying in Air Corridors in Germany and Berlin Control Zone," defining the Zone as the airspace between ground level and 10,000 feet within a radius of 20 miles from the BASC, and outlining the BASC's functions.

1946

20 Oct 46 Under Allied Control Council supervision, the first and last postwar free election is held in all of Berlin with the Soviet-sponsored Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland (SED) getting less than one-fifth of the votes.

22 Oct 46 Minor revisions in Berlin flight rules are issued by the Allied Control Council's Air Directorate (DAIR/P (45) (71).

1947

12 Aug 47 The freely elected Mayor of Berlin, Ernest Reuter, is rejected by a Soviet veto in the Allied Kommandatura.

1948

17 Mar 48 The Soviets propose fundamental changes in Berlin corridor flight procedures which would have crippled the freedom of Western action in the Berlin Airlift.

20 Mar 48 Soviet representatives quit the Allied Control Council in Berlin.

1 Apr 48 Restrictions on Western road and rail traffic into Berlin imposed by the Soviets are countered by the Western Powers "little airlift" to supply their military garrisons in the city.

5 Apr 48 A Soviet fighter illegally stunting over Berlin crashes into a scheduled Berlin transport aircraft as it prepares to land at Gatow, killing the 14 passengers and crew and the Soviet pilot.

10 Jun 48 Road traffic between the Western occupation zones and Berlin is interrupted by the Soviets and rail traffic is halted.

12 Jun 48 The Helmstedt-Berlin highway is closed by the Soviets "for repairs."

16 Jun 48 The Soviet Commandant quits the Allied Kommandatura in Berlin.

18 Jun 48 A currency reform is instituted by the Western Powers in their occupation zones but is not extended to Berlin due to Russian opposition.

23 Jun 48 The Soviets order currency reform in East Germany and all of Berlin, and the Western Powers introduce the West Mark in West Berlin.

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24 Jun 48      The Soviets halt all ground traffic from the Western zones to Berlin.

26 Jun 48      The first USAFE C-47's are dispatched from Wiesbaden Air Base to officially inaugurate the biggest aerial resupply operation in history - the Berlin Airlift.

29 Jun 48      The USAF Berlin Airlift Task Force is formed at Wiesbaden Air Base.

16 Jul 48      Sixty B-29's are deployed to British bases by the United States.

30 Aug 48      The Moscow Four Power Agreement provides for the use of the Soviet sponsored currency in all of Berlin.

1 Sep 48      The Four Power military governors begin meetings in Berlin to implement the Moscow Agreement which prove to be fruitless.

6 Sep 48      Soviet-controlled rioters force evacuation of the Berlin City Council from the City Hall in East Berlin to West Berlin.

18 Sep 48      A Soviet aide memoire seeks to obtain control of air access to Berlin by limiting air corridor traffic to transports supplying the needs of the occupation forces, but this is rejected by the Western Powers.

15 Oct 48      United States and British air transport units are merged into a Combined Airlift Task Force to increase the massive Berlin resupply operation.

25 Oct 48      A United Nations Security Council resolution for settlement of the Berlin dispute is vetoed by the Soviet Union.

1949

4 Feb 49      The Western Powers tighten counter-blockade measures by stopping all truck traffic between the Western and Soviet Occupation Zones.

19 Mar 49      A Constitution for an East Zone "government" is approved by the Communist controlled People's Council in the Soviet Sector of Berlin.

20 Mar 49      The Western Powers announce that the West German Deutsche Mark will be the only legal currency in their Sectors of Berlin.

16 Apr 49      The Berlin airlift Easter Parade tops previous records by bringing 12,940 tons of food and coal into Berlin in 24 hours.

4 May 49      The Four Powers announce signature of the so-called New York Agreement lifting all Soviet restrictions on commerce, transport, and communication between the Western Occupation Zones and Berlin.

12 May 49      Soviet action is begun to end the blockade of ground access to Berlin after the American and British airlift had transported more than 2 million tons of food, coal and other critical items to Berlin in approximately 277,000 sorties over an 11 month period, but the city's overall supply system and large portions of its transportation system remain severed.

30 Sep 49      The Western Powers officially terminate Operation Vittles and Operation Plain Fare - the Berlin airlift.

1952

29 May 52      Soviet fighters fire upon an Air France DC-4 flying well within the Frankfurt-Berlin air corridor, seriously wounding two passengers and a stewardess.

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1953

12 Mar 53 A British Lincoln bomber flying at the Western end of the north corridor to Berlin is shot down near Eckern by Soviet fighters, with a loss of seven lives.

7 Apr 53 Occupation Power representatives begin a series of meetings at Berlin-Karishorst to discuss air safety in the Berlin corridors, but these meetings are fruitless.

17 Jun 53 East Berlin and East Zone inhabitants mount uprisings against the Communist tyranny but are crushed by the Soviet Forces.

1954

25 Jan 54 A Four Power Foreign Ministers Conference opens in Berlin to discuss problems arising from the occupation of Germany but ends on 18 February without major agreements.

27 Jun 54 (C) The Soviets cease passing their flight plans to the Western Power Controllers in the BASC and verbally announce that the vertical airspace limits of the three Berlin air corridors are 750 meters and 3,050 meters.

3 Oct 54 The three Western Powers reaffirm their determination to maintain the Four Power status of Berlin and this guarantee is endorsed three weeks later by the other members of the NATO.

1955

5 May 55 The Western Powers take final actions on the "Paris Accords" to implement the contractual arrangements commonly known as the Bonn Conventions through which West Germany becomes the sovereign FRG and NATO's 15th member.

20 Sep 55 The USSR signs a treaty with the so-called German Democratic Republic (GDR) granting East Germany "complete sovereignty" but reserving the right to control military personnel and goods traffic of the three Western Allies by land, sea and air until "further agreement is reached."

1956

Nov 56 (C) Serious harassment and delay of US Army convoys at the Helmstedt checkpoint on the Berlin autobahn is begun by the Soviets.

9 Dec 56 (C) US Army convoy operations on the Helmstedt-Berlin autobahn are suspended for a lengthy period.

1957

29 Jul 57 The Western Powers join the FRG in a "Berlin Declaration" stating a common policy of German reunification.

3 Oct 57 Herr Willy Brandt is elected Mayor of West Berlin.

1958

25 May 58(C) The Soviets inform Western controllers in the BASC in writing that Berlin air corridor altitude limitations are 750 to 3,050 meters.

13 Sep 58 The Soviet Commandant in Berlin announces unilateral abrogation of the New York Agreement of 4 May 1949.

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Nov 58 (C) The Soviets delay a US Army convoy at the Helmstedt-Berlin autobahn checkpoint and refuse, for the first time, to permit either forward or backward movement.

10 Nov 58 Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev touches off a new Berlin crisis in a speech at Moscow's Lenin Stadium by declaring a Soviet intention to force withdrawal of Western Power military garrisons from Berlin.

27 Nov 58 A Soviet diplomatic note to the Western Powers declares invalid all protocols and treaties entered into by the Soviet Union with respect to Berlin and establishes a six month's deadline for agreement on a "free city" status for Berlin.

16 Dec 58 A NATO Communiqué issued at Paris states that Soviet denunciation of quadripartite agreements on Berlin and its access route would not deprive the other parties of their rights or relieve the Soviet Union of its obligations under these agreements.

19 Dec 58 A US State Department Memorandum declares that the "attempts by the Soviet Union to undermine the rights of the United States to be in Berlin and to have access thereto are in violation of international law."

1959

2 Feb 59 (C) A US Army convoy is held up at the Helmstedt checkpoint for 54 hours and is allowed to proceed only after governmental level negotiations.

11 May 59 A Big Four Foreign Ministers Conference opens at Geneva to discuss the Soviet ultimatum on Berlin and continues for three months without success.

1960

16 May 60 Soviet Premier Khrushchev uses the American U-2 incident to break up a Four Power Summit Conference in Paris.

1961

4-5 Jun 61 President John F. Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev meet in Vienna and Khrushchev presents an aide-mémoire demanding signature of a Four Power German Treaty and evacuation of military garrisons from West Berlin within six months.

15 Jun 61 To curb the increasing flow of East German refugees to the West, the Communists restrict exits from the East Zone to persons obtaining official permission.

20 Jun 61 The GDR announces that effective 1 August all foreign aircraft overflying East Germany will be subject to a new "law" containing "Instructions Concerning Aeronautical Radio Service" which will require East German radio permission before entering or leaving East Zone airspace, but no action is subsequently taken to apply this "law" to Western aircraft.

18 Jul 61 The US informs the USSR that it will never allow Communist domination of West Berlin, and that it will maintain its rights in Berlin, including free access thereto, even if the USSR and the GDR sign a separate peace treaty.

31 Jul 61 With West Berlin still providing an escape route, East German refugee totals exceed 30,000 for this month, or more than double the figure for June.

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13 Aug 61 The East German regime barricades all but 13 of the East-West Berlin crossing points.

17 Aug 61 After installing temporary barbed wire and concrete-slab barriers at personnel and vehicular crossing points between East and West Berlin, the Communists begin construction of a cinder block wall between the two sectors.

20 Aug 61 At the President's direction, the US Army Europe's 1st Battle Group, 13th Infantry arrives in Berlin to augment the US garrison and is met by the then Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson.

20 Aug 61 Concrete and steel replace barbed wire along the East Zone border and Communist border guards are more heavily armed.

22 Aug 61 Communist controls at the 7 remaining East-West Berlin crossing points are tightened and movement of Allied diplomatic corps and military personnel is restricted to a single crossing point on Friedrichstrasse, commonly called Check Point Charlie, while East Berliners require a special pass which in effect cuts off thousands of commuters formerly working in West Berlin.

23 Aug 61 A Soviet diplomatic note to the Western Allies supports GDR claims to air control authority and charges abuses of Occupation Power agreements on the Berlin air corridors, but these claims are rejected by the Western Powers the following day.

Sep 61 General Lucius D. Clay, USA (Ret.) is appointed as the President's personal representative in Berlin and the highest ranking US official in the city.

6 Oct 61 An allied military ambulance -placed at Check Point Charlie on emergency standby following highly adverse West Berliner reaction to non-intervention by US military police when an East German youth, Peter Fechter, was shot down by East German guards on 17 August and left to die at the base of the dividing wall inside the East Zone -is refused access to East Berlin for the purpose of assisting a West German youth shot near the wall inside the East Sector.

25 Oct 61 East Berlin guards refuse entry via Check Point Charlie to Allied personnel not in uniform unless they present identity documents, and a US tank-infantry force is moved up to the access point.

27 Oct 61 The Soviets refuse to "interfere with the laws of the GDR," and move 10 tanks up to confront 3 US tanks parked on the East-West Berlin dividing line.

28 Oct 61 As thousands of Berliners on both sides of the wall watch, US and Soviet tanks are withdrawn from Check Point Charlie after nearly 24 hours, and thereafter only Allied military personnel in uniform enter East Berlin.

1962

Feb 62 The Soviets announce in the Berlin Air Safety Center that all airspace up to 7,000 feet in the three air corridors must be "reserved" between certain hours the following day for use by Russian transport aircraft, and make similar demands for corridor airspace reservation at various altitudes for varying periods of time on six other occasions in February, but the Western Powers reject these airspace "reservation" attempts.

Aug 62 The Soviet Commandant's office, maintained separately in East Berlin, is abolished, and an East German Major General is appointed by the Soviets as Commandant of East Berlin.

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1963

2 Apr 63 ~~(S)~~ The Soviets protest in the BASC the flight of a British privately owned Cessna 310, and Soviet fighters chase and fire past this airplane while it is enroute in the South air corridor, but it lands safely in Berlin.

26 Jun 63 President Kennedy visits Berlin on the Berlin airlift anniversary date.

27 Jun 63 The USAFE Vice Commander in Chief, Lieutenant General R. M. Montgomery, pilots the first T-39 jet to Berlin to inaugurate routine flights in the corridor by this aircraft.

19 Jul 63 A USAF C-140 makes the first flight to Berlin by this four engine jet aircraft.

10 Oct 63 ~~(S)~~ Two small US Army convoys are held up by the Soviets at the Western checkpoint on the Berlin autobahn for 15 hours and one of them is then blocked by Soviet armored personnel carriers at Babelsberg checkpoint outside Berlin, and finally released after governmental protest.

4 Nov 63 ~~(S)~~ United States, British and French convoys are blocked at the Helmstedt checkpoint for 41 hours.

17 Nov 63 The Western Allies protest two instances of Communist search lights beamed at Pan American World Airways (PAN AM) planes while they were making landings at West Berlin's Tempelhof Airport.

1964

30 May 64 PAN AM inaugurates direct Boeing 707 service between New York and Tegel Airport in West Berlin without incident, although the Soviets protest.

12 Jun 64 The USSR signs a "Treaty of Friendship" with the GDR at Moscow which states that Soviet obligations under international agreements are not affected, but West Berlin must be regarded as an "independent political unit."

20 Jun 64 A Soviet note to the Western Powers charges that the Pan American New York-Berlin operations are "unlawful" without the consent of the GDR.

26 Jun 64 A declaration by the three Western Occupation Powers refuses recognition of the Soviet-GDR Friendship Treaty and rejects the Soviet contention that Berlin is a separate political unit.

17 Jul 64 A Soviet statement rejects Western Power proposals for reunification of Germany based on free elections.

1965

25 Mar 65 ~~(S)~~ East German helicopters begin flights along the borders of East Berlin and within the Berlin Control Zone in violation of Four Power Agreements and despite Western Power protests to the Soviets.

4 Apr 65 ~~(S)~~ Soviets announce in the Berlin Air Safety Center a "restriction" of Western Power flights in the Berlin air corridor to the airspace between 6,500 feet and 10,000 feet during Soviet-East German military maneuvers 5-11 April but the Western Powers reject this unilateral decision.

7 Apr 65 ~~(S)~~ Communist jet fighters climax a week of mounting harassment by flying over West Berlin to buzz the West German parliamentary meeting, fire blank cannon shells, and cause sonic booms by diving over Western Power installations and airfields at altitudes of 300 feet and less.

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21 Jun 65

United States, British and French controllers in the BASC record nine oral protests to the Soviets concerning 12 instances of Gatow Air Traffic Control Zone violations by East German helicopters. After overflight of small areas of West Berlin during five of 15 positively identified flights between March and June 1966, these East German helicopter operations are suspended this date.

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Berlin is no Laos - there isn't much to play with there.  
Berlin is everything.

President John F. Kennedy

# GERMANY 1948 - 1949

SHOWING ZONAL BOUNDARIES, AIR CORRIDORS AND AIRLIFT BASES

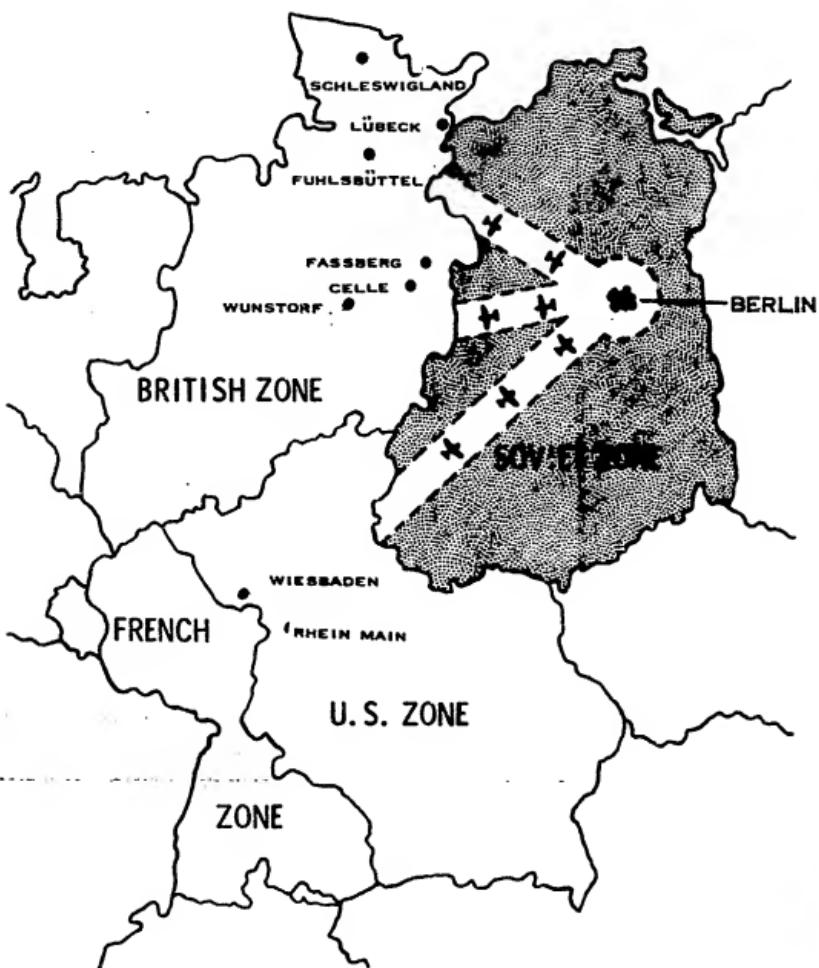


Figure 1

## UNITED STATES AIR ACCESS TO BERLIN

1945 - 1965

### I. THE POLITICAL - MILITARY BACKGROUND

#### A. THE WESTERN STAKE IN BERLIN

The political and military factors which shaped the unique situation of the former capital city of Germany were of vital importance in the global struggle between the Free World and the Communist ideology.<sup>1</sup> By 1965, Berlin had been a focal point of this crucial struggle for two decades, and even when wars were going on in places like Korea and Vietnam, it was Berlin that remained potentially the most dangerous threat to world peace. For, it was only in Berlin that the world's two great nuclear powers - the United States and the Soviet Union - met like flint and steel in a tinder box.

Berlin was the only geographical point in the world where military forces and political commitments of the United States and the Soviet Union were locked continuously in a direct confrontation. It was the only major city which had remained encircled by Soviet military forces in the wake of World War II, with the exception of Vienna,\* that was not completely Communist dominated 20 years later. At the same time, no other city in the world was subjected to a more ruthless, unremitting assault upon its political, economic, and moral viability by overt and covert subversive activities, propaganda threats, economic disruption, access route harassment, and murder of its citizens. Too, at no other place on earth were the realities of Communist totalitarianism more clearly displayed before the peoples of the Free World than in the prison wall dividing the city of Berlin.

For both the free citizens of West Germany and the subjugated population of the Soviet Zone, West Berlin in the years between 1945 and 1965 was the physical symbol of their unswerving desire to one day achieve reunification of the German nation. For the Soviet Union and its East German

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\* Vienna nearly suffered the same fate as Berlin, but the Russians finally evacuated Austria in September 1955.

puppet regime, West Berlin, an island of freedom in a sea of totalitarianism, was "a bone in our throat," because it provided for the enslaved people surrounding it unmistakable evidence of the benefits of a free society. Above all, neither the United States or the Soviet Union could afford the dangerous delusion that the goal of eventual reunification which Berlin symbolized for the German people could be altered by anything less than the elimination of West Germany from the community of free nations.

The Soviet Union's undeviating aim, whether in times of crises or in periods of deceptive lull, was stated by Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko with rare candor in 1960: "The most equitable approach to this question would be, of course, the extension to West Berlin of the full sovereignty of the German Democratic Republic."<sup>2</sup> Just as clearly, abandonment of this beleaguered outpost of freedom by the West would inevitably lead to a collapse of United States influence in West Germany. It would also deal a mortal blow to the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance forged in 1949 to defend Western Europe against any resort to military force by the Soviet Union to advance its political aims.

In terms of purely conventional military power, the Western position in Berlin had never been tenable.<sup>3</sup> Within the iron ring drawn around Berlin by the Soviet and East German military forces in the 1960's were over 10,000\* soldiers of the Western occupation powers stationed in West Berlin. These Western military garrisons existed only to preserve civil order in West Berlin and as pledges of the Western determination to remain in the city. The ground combat power of the Soviet armed forces in Central Europe in the 1960's was at least twice that of the Western alliance. Both the United States and the Soviet forces had tactical atomic weapons in Europe. But the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military forces could not match the Soviet capabilities for a conventional war in Europe.

Thus, in the two decades after World War II, the "Berlin problem" constituted a unique proving ground for

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\* Versus about 6,500 in 1948-1949.

both the global ideological conflict and the balance of military power between East and West. The Soviet effort to politically engulf the populace of West Berlin through controlled elections, terrorist tactics, economic coercion, and the threat of overwhelming military strength unquestionably reached flood tide in the Berlin blockade of 1948-1949. Had the West Berliner's personal courage and faith in the West failed then, the Berlin Airlift would probably not have saved West Berlin from eventual Communist political domination.<sup>4</sup> On the other side, the East German uprisings in 1953, and the massive exodus from the Soviet Zone right up to the time that escape was sealed off in 1961, clearly demonstrated that the Soviet Union could not win the ideological battle in Berlin except by military force.

Although the Soviet Union did not carry out its threats of 1958 and 1961 to resolve the "Berlin problem" by force, the basic Soviet demand for withdrawal of the Western military garrisons from West Berlin remained unchanged in 1965.<sup>5</sup> The Soviet Union signed its long threatened "separate treaty" with the so-called German Democratic Republic (GDR) on 12 June 1964 but excluded any alteration of its responsibilities under international treaties from this agreement. Accompanying Soviet assertions that West Berlin must be regarded as an "independent political unit" were rejected by the Western occupation powers. In turn, the Soviet Union rejected an Allied three power declaration calling for the reunification of Germany based on free elections.<sup>6</sup> A United States legislator's\* suggestion that Berlin become a United Nations (UN) responsibility was equally unacceptable to the Soviet Union because this would preclude extension of the East German regime to West Berlin.

Some observers were of the opinion that a combination of the Communist success in arresting the loss of East German manpower by construction of the wall in Berlin in 1961 and deadlocked East-West discussions at Geneva in 1962 had resulted in a tacit acceptance by both the United

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\* First put forth by Senator Mike Mansfield in 1961, but rejected by President John F. Kennedy.

States and the Soviet Union of a status quo on the problem of Berlin. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union continued to push the claims of its puppet East German regime to sovereignty over West Berlin and its access routes from the West by every possible means short of armed conflict.

In short, West Berlin had survived recurring crises arising from Soviet threats to dominate it by force during the 1940's and 1950's because the commitment of the Western occupation powers to preserve this freedom was bolstered by a nuclear weapons superiority. It continued to exist as a free political entity in the 1960's primarily by virtue of an apparent global East-West nuclear stand-off.

The United States and its Allies had pledged many times to defend West Berlin with whatever means were necessary. United on this pledge, they were less unanimous about how it would be honored in the face of the growing Soviet nuclear capability. The key problem confronting the West in the 1960's, therefore, was not whether West Berlin could be defended, per se, but whether it could be defended to the end without touching off an atomic war.

In any case, there was no reason to doubt that if the West could be bluffed, maneuvered, or driven out of Berlin, the Soviet Union would ultimately win the Cold War. For, thereafter, no American pledge of moral or military assistance to small or neutral nations resisting Communism anywhere in the world would be accepted at full value. Thus, as the then Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson told the people of West Berlin in 1961, "we have pledged our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor to the defense of Berlin."

## B. BERLIN NEGOTIATIONS AND AGREEMENTS

### 1. Wartime Three Power Agreements

The four power (United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union) occupation of Berlin was based on a number of wartime and postwar accords.<sup>7</sup> A British cabinet committee headed by Mr. Clement Attlee recommended in the summer of 1943 that the Allied forces be deployed in three main zones roughly equal

in size, and that Berlin be a separate zone jointly occupied by the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union. The Foreign Ministers of the three powers agreed at the Moscow Conference in October 1943 to the establishment of a European Advisory Committee at London to study measures for ensuring close cooperation on European questions as the war progressed. Based on agreements reached by the European Advisory Committee under the leadership of Ambassador John G. Winant of the United States, Sir William Strang of Great Britain and F. T. Husev of the Soviet Union, the Big Three Foreign Ministers signed an accord, commonly called the London Protocols, on 12 September 1944 which specified that defeated Germany would be divided into three zones, with Berlin being jointly occupied by the three powers:<sup>8</sup>

The area of Berlin (this is deemed to mean the area of "Greater Berlin" as legally established on 27th April 1920) shall be jointly occupied by the armed forces of the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, each in the person of their Commander in Chief.

An inter-allied authority (to be called the Kommandatura) composed of three commanders to be appointed by the appropriate Commanders in Chief shall be set up for the joint administration of Berlin.

On 14 November 1944, the European Advisory Committee agreed on a map which defined the occupation zone boundaries in Germany (Figure 1), and to three documents generally known as the Berlin Declarations that were to be issued by the respective commanders in chief in Berlin after the German capitulation. These accords were included without amendment in the Yalta and Potsdam agreements of 1945. They were widened on 26 July 1945 to include France in the occupation of Germany.

Although Berlin would be an enclave 110 miles inside the occupation zone assigned to the Soviet Union under

the London Protocols, no attempt was made by the Western powers to secure any formal guarantee that they would have unrestricted access to the city.<sup>9</sup> The question was never officially raised.\* It was apparently felt in Washington that the question of access could be settled later on a military level. Also, the Soviet members of the European Advisory Committee repeatedly insisted that "the presence of American and British forces in Berlin 'of course' carried with it all necessary facilities of access."

In the London Protocols of 1944 on the occupation pattern for Germany, these are the key passages on Berlin:<sup>10</sup>

The Berlin area . . . will be jointly occupied by the armed forces of the USA, UK, and USSR, assigned by their respective commanders in chief.

Each of the three powers may, at its discretion, include among the forces assigned to occupation duties under the command of its commander in chief, auxiliary contingents from the forces of any other Allied power which has participated in military operations against Germany.

This language, and some other statements, apparently led American and British negotiators of that time to the conclusion that the right of access was "implicit" in the wartime three power agreements.

The European Advisory Committee accords at London were confirmed at the Yalta Conference in February 1945, and the Soviet Union agreed to a French zone of occupation provided that it came from the territories allocated to the United States and Great Britain. On 22 May 1945, the four powers approved the formal declaration of Germany's defeat and the occupation arrangements drawn up

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\* Although American diplomat Robert Murphy urged Ambassador Winant to do so, and a British suggestion in 1944 that the Western Allies demand a physical corridor to Berlin was reportedly opposed by the US War Department.

by the European Advisory Committee. The three Berlin documents prepared by the Committee were issued by the four power commanders in chief in Berlin on 5 June 1945.<sup>11</sup>

The first of these documents was a "Declaration Regarding the Defeat of Germany" whereby the four Allies assumed supreme authority in Germany by virtue of its unconditional surrender and announced their intent to establish occupation zones.<sup>12</sup>

Germany, within her frontiers as they were on 31st December 1937, will for the purposes of the occupation be divided into four zones, one to be allotted to each power as follows:

- An Eastern zone to the USSR
- A Northwestern zone to the UK
- A Southwestern zone to the US
- A Western zone to France

The second document established the Commander in Chief of each occupation zone as the supreme authority, with the proviso that these commanders would together constitute the Allied Control Council with headquarters in Berlin to act in unanimous agreement on matters affecting Germany as a whole. The administration of the "Greater Berlin" area was to be controlled by four commandants under the direction of the Control Council, each of whom would serve in turn as the Chief Commandant. The third Berlin Declaration of 5 June announced the boundaries of the four zones of occupation and the occupation of Berlin by the four powers.

At the Potsdam Conference, 17 July to 3 August 1945, the victorious Allies reached certain agreements on a provisional status for Germany:<sup>13</sup>

It is not the intention of the Allies to destroy or enslave the German people. It is the intention of the Allies that the German people be given an opportunity to prepare for the eventual reconstruction of their life on a democratic and peaceful basis.

Berlin was explicitly recognized as the capital of all Germany. The Allies noted "with satisfaction" that the European Advisory Committee had ably discharged its principal tasks in the recommendations it had provided for the terms of the German surrender, occupation, and postwar control. The Committee was then dissolved. The results of its labors, however, proved to be the most significant factors in occupation power negotiations on Germany and Berlin during the next 20 years.

Perhaps the most fateful single decision setting the stage for the "Berlin problem" in the two decades after World War II occurred in March 1945 when the United States determined on purely military grounds against an all-out drive on Berlin, ignoring British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's urgent advocacy of this action on both political and military grounds:<sup>14</sup>

I therefore consider that from a political standpoint we should march as far east into Germany as possible, and that should Berlin be in our grasp, we should certainly take it. This also seems sound on military grounds.

If they take Berlin will not their impression that they have been the overwhelming contributors to our common victory . . . lead them into a mood which will raise grave and formidable difficulties in the future?

General Lucius D. Clay, United States Army (USA),\* the military governor of the United States occupation zone of Germany in the immediate postwar era, said after the event:<sup>15</sup>

Since the zonal boundaries had been laid down months in advance, it did not appear to matter which armies were the first to enter Berlin.

## 2. Early Postwar Accords

The problem of initial Western access to Berlin

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\* Unless otherwise specified, all United States military personnel mentioned in this study are US Air Force personnel.

following the capitulation of Nazi Germany was raised by President Harry S. Truman in a letter to Soviet Premier Stalin on 14 June 1945 in connection with proposals for the withdrawal of the allied armies into their respective zones of occupation:<sup>16</sup>

Now that the unconditional surrender of Germany has been accomplished . . . I propose that we should at once issue definitive instructions which will get forces into their respective zones . . . including in these arrangements simultaneous movement of the national garrisons into greater Berlin and provision of free access by air, road and rail from Frankfurt and Bremen to Berlin for US Forces.

The Soviet Premier replied to President Truman in June that a temporary absence of the Soviet commander in chief and the completion of mine clearing in Berlin would require delay of the United States forces entry into the city until 1 July.<sup>17</sup> He added: "On our part all necessary measures will be taken in Germany and Austria in accordance with the above stated plan." The United States thereafter maintained that this and a subsequent Truman-Stalin exchange constituted a binding commitment by the Soviet Union to afford free access by the United States to Berlin by air, rail, and road,<sup>18</sup> and that, in any case, it was declaratory of the necessary rights of the United States under the basic quadripartite agreement on the occupation of Berlin.\*

American, British, and Soviet representatives in Berlin met on 29 June 1945 to implement the Allied right of free access implied by the Truman-Stalin letters.<sup>19</sup> According to the United States notes of this conference: "It was agreed to accept the autobahn Hannover-Magdeburg-Brandenburg-Berlin road for use by both British and American forces . . . and . . . the Magdeburg-Berlin railway. The American representative,

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\* The legal basis of the opposing East-West postwar positions on the right of access to Berlin is discussed in greater detail in Part II - Berlin Air Access Operations, this study.

General Clay, asked only for 'the right to move without restrictions under whatever Russian regulations are set down'." The Western representatives also asked for several air lanes but the Soviets agreed to only one route, Magdeburg-Berlin.\*

General Clay has described his first meeting with Soviet Marshal Zhukov in Berlin on 29 June:<sup>20</sup>

"He requested that our initial access to Berlin be effected over a specific route and a specified railway route, as all others were needed for demobilization of the Russian armies. While this arrangement could have been obtained in writing, I refused to regard it as other than a temporary measure since it seemed obvious to me that the joint occupation of Berlin clearly conveyed with it the right of access by any and all routes.

Nevertheless, as a result of the lack of any subsequent formal agreement, the Western Allies thereafter were able to use only two of the 11 main surface routes - four highways, five rail lines, and two water routes - actually connecting Berlin with the Western occupation zones.<sup>21</sup> Allied Control Council working level agreements established Western power use of the rail line through Marienborn, and through several verbal arrangements, but chiefly through practice, the Western Allies established access on the highway between Helmstedt and Berlin. Even this limited ground access was maintained virtually at Soviet sufferance.

The Allied Coordinating Committee on 28 November 1945 partially approved proposals by the Air Directorate of the Allied Control Council to the extent of creating three air corridors connecting Berlin with the Western occupation zones.<sup>22</sup> These three airlanes, Berlin-Hamburg (north corridor), Berlin-Buckeburg (center corridor), and

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\* According to minutes written by Clay from memory, it was further agreed "... that all traffic - air, road and rail ... would be free from border search or control by customs or military authorities."

Berlin-Frankfurt-am-Main (south corridor) were formally approved by the Allied Control Council on 30 November 1945. Soviet representatives insisted that three additionally proposed airlanes, Berlin-Warsaw, Berlin-Prague, and Berlin-Copenhagen, together with a Buckeburg-Prague route desired by the British, required higher governmental authority, and they were never approved by the Soviets. Each of the three air corridors established between the Western occupation zones and Berlin by the Allied Control Council agreement of 1945 was delimited as being 20 English miles wide.<sup>23</sup> These corridors were to be used by Western power aircraft "with full freedom of action."<sup>24</sup>

The operation of a quadripartite Berlin Air Safety Center (BASC) with authority to enforce rules of flight and to guarantee safe separation of aircraft flying over Berlin or in the corridors to Berlin was approved with certain modifications by the Air Directorate of the Allied Control Council on 12 December 1945.<sup>24</sup> As authorized by the Council's Coordinating Committee, the Air Directorate also established the Berlin Control Zone (BCZ), subdivided into air traffic zones for the various national airfields in the Greater Berlin area, and drafted flight rules in 1945 which were issued in revised form toward the end of 1946.<sup>25</sup>

While the Soviets attempted to greatly circumscribe the Western air access to Berlin in the years after 1945 through unilaterally imposed "restrictions" or proposed changes in flight procedures, the agreement of 1945 on the use of the three air corridors linking West Germany with Berlin had been signed by their Allied Control Council representative and they tried apparently only on one occasion\* to deny that this agreement was binding.<sup>26</sup> The Berlin Air Safety Center procedures and the air corridor and Berlin Control Zone flight rules issued by the Air Directorate, however, did not achieve formal quadripartite signature at Control Council level. This fact was later exploited by the Russians to dispute the "legality" of these rules and to justify their attempts to make changes in these rules aimed at limiting Western air access to Berlin. \*\*

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\* On 10 September 1948, during the Berlin Blockade.

\*\* See Part II - Berlin Air Access Operations, this study.

When the Soviet Union terminated its 11-month's total blockade of the land and water access routes between the Western occupation zones and Berlin in May 1949, the initial accord lifting its restrictions, commonly known as the New York Agreement, was followed by a further accord between the Foreign Ministers of the four powers at Paris on 20 June 1949.<sup>27</sup> This accord stated that the New York Agreement was reaffirmed and "would be maintained." The occupation authorities in each zone would have "an obligation to insure the normal functioning of rail, water, and road transport." This post-blockade pledge of unrestricted Western power access to Berlin and freedom of movement within Greater Berlin was the Soviet Union's last formal acknowledgement of this obligation in the years between 1945 and 1965. It proved to be as worthless as its predecessors.

### 3. Unilateral Negotiations and Accords

The unilateral negotiations undertaken and the accords publicly announced\* by the Western powers and the Soviet Union regarding Germany after World War II were highlighted by the following: (a) the Bonn Conventions of 1952, (b) the Soviet-German Democratic Republic treaty of 1955, (c) the Khrushchev "free city" ultimatums of 1958 and 1961, and (d) the GDR "legality" campaign culminating in the Soviet-East German treaty of 1964. All of these events were reflections of the implacable Soviet drive to liquidate the four power occupation of Germany.

As discussed later on, the Soviet Union began overtly undermining the four power control and administration of Germany and Berlin almost immediately after the cessation of hostilities.<sup>28</sup> The split of the former Allies into opposing camps and the start of full-scale Cold War were signaled by the Soviet blockade of Berlin in 1948-1949. Creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949 represented Western power acceptance of these postwar realities.

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\* Obviously, not all Soviet-East German regime agreements were made public, for example, those resulting in the creation of the formidable East German military forces.

Establishment of a West German government began officially in July 1948, and on 1 September 1949 the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) came into being. Military government ceased and Allied High Commissioners were appointed. The FRG was given domestic authority in most respects, but it had no international authority and could not create military forces. The Soviet Union responded to these Western power actions by the formation in October 1949 of the so-called "German Democratic Republic."

While drafting the revised Occupation Status for Germany in May 1949, the Western Allies had issued a statement of principles to govern the status of West Berlin. They reserved their occupation rights in the city, but granted the West Berliners certain legislative, executive, and judicial rights. West Berlin was elevated to the level of a quasi-state having representation, without voting power except in committees, in the Federal government's legislative bodies at Bonn.

Following signature of the contractual arrangements in 1952 known as the Bonn Conventions, the three Western Allies pledged that their forces would remain in Berlin as long as their responsibilities required, and that they would treat any attack against Berlin as an attack upon these forces. On 9 May 1955, four days after the occupation status of West Germany was officially terminated, the sovereign Federal Republic became a NATO member. The GDR joined the Soviet-sponsored Warsaw Pact alliance on 14 May, and on 6 October the Soviet Union gave the East German regime "sovereign" status.

The Soviet Union established diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany, but the Western powers adhered to their commitment to a reunification of Germany through free elections and refused to recognize the so-called GDR.

The Soviet-GDR treaty of 1955 granting "complete sovereignty" to the GDR stipulated that the East German regime would guard and exercise control over East Berlin, its own frontiers, the demarcation line between the GDR and the FRG, and the lines of communications between West

Berlin and West Germany.<sup>29</sup> The GDR was authorized to deal directly with the Federal Republic on and to control civilian rail and road traffic from and to West Germany; however, the Soviet Union temporarily reserved the right to control Western Allied military personnel and freight traffic between West Germany and Berlin by land, sea, and air "until further agreement is reached."

The Soviet Union after 1955 sought to advance the GDR's "sovereignty" claims by every means short of armed conflict.<sup>30</sup> These means encompassed diplomatic, political, and economic pressures; recurrent threats to resolve the issue by force, and, in several instances, direct military confrontations in Berlin and on the autobahn access route. In substance, the Soviets claimed that the Western Allies had forfeited their right of occupation in Berlin by rearming West Germany in violation of the Potsdam Agreement.<sup>31</sup> They said that the Western power rights derived from Allied Control Council agreements which were internal arrangements between the Allies and were not binding on the GDR. Therefore, the GDR had the sovereign right, based on the 1955 treaty with the Soviet Union, to control all ground, water, and air traffic in East Germany, but had given this "right" back to the Soviet Union temporarily until a German peace treaty or other four power agreement was signed on Berlin. The GDR was ready to negotiate with any country for access to its territory, and already had such agreements with a number\* of countries.

In November 1958, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev demanded withdrawal of the Western military forces from Berlin, proposed the establishment of West Berlin as a "demilitarized free city," and called for negotiations between the "two German states" with the aim of confederation.<sup>32</sup> If the Western Allies failed to meet these demands within six months, he said that the Soviet Union would sign a separate peace treaty with East Germany unilaterally terminating the occupation status of Berlin. The Western powers rejected this ultimatum and its demands, and the four power Foreign Ministers met at Geneva in May 1959, with FRD and GDR representatives present, to consider

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\* Communist or neutralist bloc countries.

all aspects of the German problem.

The Western Allies put forth a comprehensive plan for phased reunification of a democratic Germany, progressive military force reductions in Europe, and ceilings on Soviet and United States military strengths with proper safeguards. Soviet counterproposals called for separate peace treaties with the "two German states"; a "demilitarized free Berlin"; removal of NATO forces from "foreign territory"; and withdrawal of Soviet troops from East Germany, Poland, and Hungary. These talks went on until early August 1959 without major results.

Premier Khrushchev's subsequent "Camp David" talks with President Dwight D. Eisenhower during a visit to the United States failed to reconcile the East-West positions on Germany and Berlin. Further diplomatic exchanges eventually led to a Summit Meeting at Paris in May 1960, but Khrushchev used the American U-2 reconnaissance plane incident as a pretext for breaking up this conference. Nevertheless, the Soviet Premier suspended his ultimatum deadline during the American presidential campaign of 1960.

Then he presented to President John F. Kennedy in meetings at Vienna on 3-4 June 1961 an even more threatening six months ultimatum for signature of a German peace treaty. This renewed Soviet threat was met by a firm display of United States strength and the Soviet deadline again lapsed. But, in the meantime, as West Berlin's Mayor Willy Brandt said, Premier Nikita Khrushchev had clearly achieved "half of his demands for a 'free city' of West Berlin," by the construction of a wall between East and West Berlin during August 1961.<sup>33</sup>

The Soviets also refused during October 1961 to "interfere with the laws of the GDR" and they deployed 10 Red Army tanks to confront three American tanks positioned on the Berlin dividing line by the US Commander Berlin (USCOB) in an abortive effort to enforce the Western occupation power right of free access to East Berlin.<sup>34</sup> The Russians sparked a similar local military crisis in October 1963 by employing armored personnel carriers to block movement of a US Army convoy on the Helmstedt-Berlin autobahn.

The Soviet Union finally culminated its unilateral "sovereignty" arrangements with the puppet East German regime by signing a "20 Year Treaty of Friendship" with the GDR on 12 June 1964.<sup>35</sup> This unilateral accord still avoided a showdown on the crucial issue of GDR "sovereignty" versus Western Occupation rights, but it reiterated that West Berlin must be considered as an independent political unit and as the capital of the GDR. The Western powers rejected these Soviet-East German contentions. In turn, the Soviet Union continued to insist that only direct negotiations between the West German government and the East German regime could solve the German reunification problem.

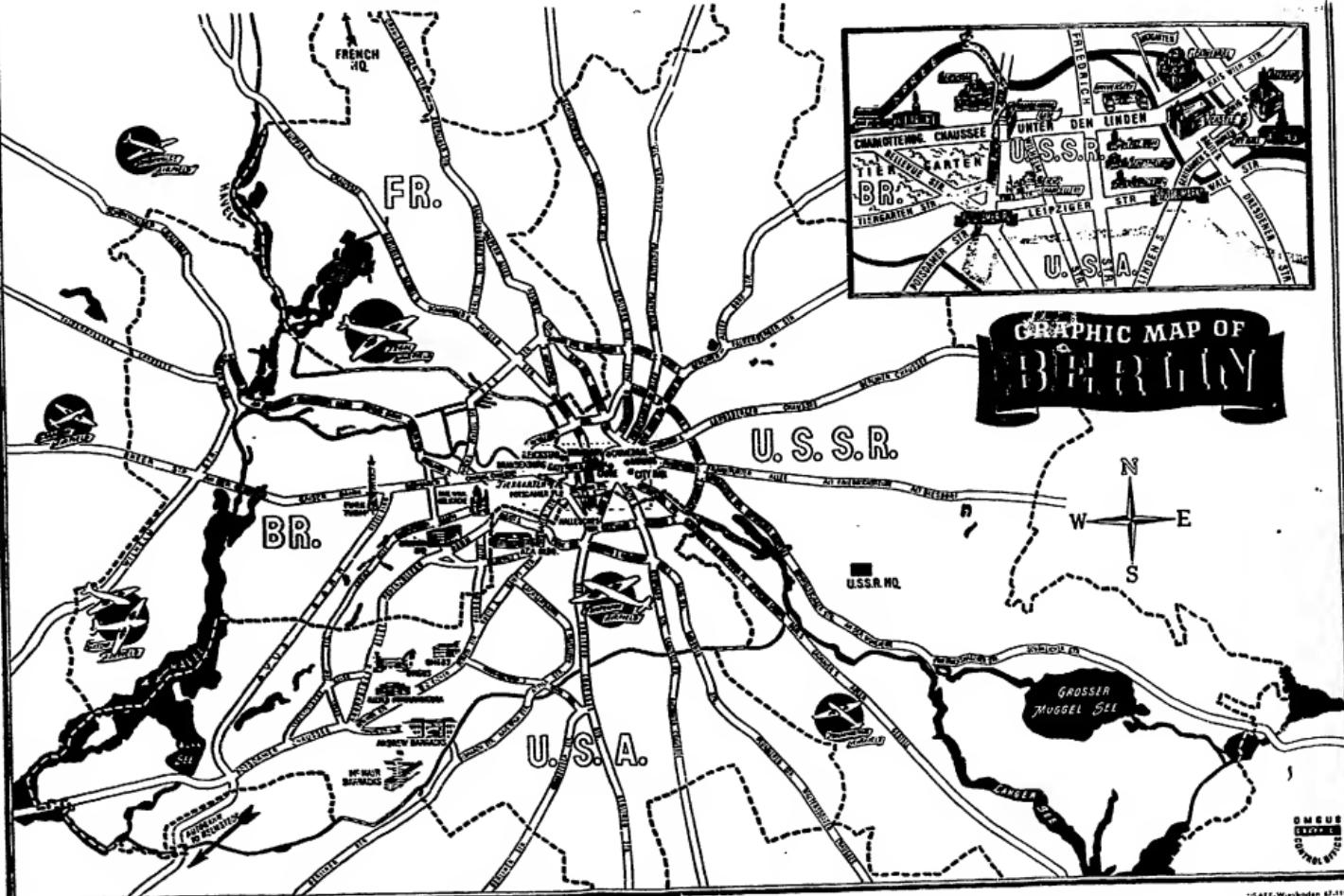
### C. THE BERLIN CRISES

#### 1. Early Quadripartite Status Destruction

It is readily apparent in retrospect that the Soviet leaders recognized as early as 1944 that Berlin would be a focal point for execution of their postwar plans.<sup>36</sup> They were insistent about Red Army capture of the city, and they evaded any time table for Western power participation in Berlin's administration. As a result, Soviet troops were the only occupation force in Berlin for two months after its capitulation on 2 May 1945. Russian troops and industrial specialists looted almost everything of value and transportable in the sectors of Berlin earmarked for Western occupation prior to the arrival of Western troops in Berlin.

A German Communist Party (KPD), led by former German Communists returning from Moscow on the heels of the Red Army, was formed in Berlin almost immediately.<sup>37</sup> The Soviets also quickly established a "sympathetic" city administration with a pre-1933 German Communist as Deputy Mayor, a Communist-dominated trade union, and various Communist front organizations.

The directors of personnel for the city and in 18 of the 20 borough administrations were Communists or Communist sympathizers. All Berlin banks were forcibly merged into one institution owned by the municipality and under Soviet control. The Soviets also controlled the head



OMBUS  
BERLIN

of the city police, the official city press and radio organs, and a food rationing system which served as an instrument for directing Berlin's political and cultural development.

The Western Allied forces evacuated in July 1945 the areas they had conquered in central Germany, which included the western parts of Mecklenburg, Thuringia, Sachsen-Anhalt, and the districts of Saxony up to the river Mulde.<sup>38</sup> Under the four power agreements, the occupation sectors of Berlin were allocated as follows:

Soviet Union	- 8 Districts covering 439 square kilometers with a population of 1.1 million
United States	- 6 Districts covering 255 square kilometers with a population of 1 million
United Kingdom	- 4 Districts covering 165 square kilometers with a population of 600,000
France	- 2 Districts covering 104 square kilometers with a population of 440,000

The Allied Military Kommandatura's functions were discussed by the United States, British, and Soviet Commanders in Chief in Berlin on 7 and 11 July 1945.<sup>39</sup> The Western representatives accepted Soviet proposed operating procedures requiring unanimous approval of all Kommandatura decisions and agreed to an announcement that all orders already issued by the Soviets to the city government would remain in force until further notice. Thereafter, the Western Commandants found it almost impossible to make significant changes in the political pattern imposed on Berlin by the Soviets because, under the agreed Kommandatura procedures, such changes required unanimous four power approval. In the end, the Western

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\* Carved from the British sector which, in turn, received part of the American sector.

powers had to remove Communists from administrative posts, gain authority over the civilian police, restrain marauding Red Army troops by force, and insure the freedom of information media in their respective sectors by Kommandatura compromise.

Official American opinion in this period, in any case, was less concerned with the political and economic development of Berlin than with getting along with the Russians. The United States Commandant\* said of the first Kommandatura meeting:<sup>40</sup>

I think it was a good indication of the policy which we were to follow in Berlin for many months, doing almost anything to win over the Russians, allay their suspicions, and convince them we were their friends.

In the following months, the Soviets changed the name of the German Communist Party to Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland and forced a Socialist Party merger with the SED in their occupation zone.<sup>41</sup> The Western powers blocked this involuntary merger in their sectors of Berlin, but the Kommandatura worked with relative harmony until the all-city elections in the autumn of 1946. The four powers agreed on a temporary constitution for the city and to city elections under democratic guarantees.

Although abetted by blatant Soviet terrorist tactics and electioneering pressures, the Communist dominated SED won less than one-fifth of the Berlin City Council seats in the first and last postwar free elections for all of Berlin during October 1946. The Soviets thereafter interpreted a provision in the temporary city constitution as requiring Kommandatura approval of almost every city government action. The Soviet Kommandant used his veto power to retain the officials planted by the Russians in key administrative posts. On 12 August 1947, he vetoed the free election of Ernest Reuter as Mayor of Berlin.

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\* Brigadier General Frank L. Howley, US Army.

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During October 1947, the Soviets tried to force a 14-point program through the Kommandatura. They claimed that its only aim was to improve the Berliner's living and working conditions. The Western powers concluded, however, that the Soviet objective was to make it appear that only the Soviet Union was concerned about these matters, and that four power administration of Berlin was a failure. The Soviets then sought to undermine the Kommandatura authority by issuing unilateral orders to city agencies, harassing the city government, establishing wage scales in the Soviet sector, and setting up postal regulations for all of Berlin.

The destruction of Berlin's four power control machinery was hastened by the Soviets during their blockade of Western ground access to the city in 1948-1949. Ostensibly, these Soviet actions and the accompanying blockade stemmed from Western plans to bolster the German economy by a currency reform. Soviet representatives left the Allied Control Council on 20 March 1948. The Soviet Commandant stopped functioning within the four power framework of the Kommandatura on 16 June. The Western Allies introduced the new West Mark in their occupation zones on 18 June, but withheld it from Berlin due to Soviet objections. Five days later the Soviets announced a unilateral currency reform in the Soviet zone and all of Berlin. Western power issuance of the West Mark in their Berlin sectors was responded to by the Soviets with a total paralysis of ground traffic between Berlin and the West on 24 June 1948.

The Soviet Union erased all remaining pretense of cooperation with its wartime allies in the early months of the blockade. Soviet controlled mobs drove the Berlin City Council from the city hall located in the Soviet sector on 6 September 1948. The legitimate city government was forced to function thereafter only in West Berlin and a rubber stamp Municipal Council was formed in the Soviet sector.

The struggle for control of Berlin's political institutions was still in progress when the Soviet blockade commenced in the summer of 1948. Nonetheless, the Communist

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stranglehold had been loosened and, in West Berlin at least, the population could no longer be manipulated at will for Soviet purposes. Confronted with a possible Communist ideological and political debacle in Berlin, the Soviet Union switched to the creation and manipulation of crises as one of its principal tools for achieving the Soviet goal in Germany and Berlin.<sup>42</sup> Pursuance of this strategy in the future was signalled by the Berlin blockade crisis of 1948-1949.

Termination of the blockade in May 1949, and renewed Soviet promises of unrestricted traffic movement to Berlin, did not alter the de facto destruction of the four power control machinery and the split of Berlin's municipal services and administration accomplished by the Communists in the years between 1945 and 1949. The three Western Commandants on 14 May 1949 issued a "Statement of Principles Governing the Relationship Between the Allied Kommandatura and Greater Berlin" which cancelled more than half of the Kommandatura directives issued in the preceding four years.<sup>43</sup> This action retained only a minimum of powers for the Allied governments and gave the city government wider legislative authority. A meeting of the four power Commandants on 12 July to implement the New York Agreement proved futile. Only two quadripartite agencies survived the 1948-1949 crisis period: the Berlin Air Safety Center and Spandau Prison.

Thereafter, the Kommandatura in Berlin functioned on a tripartite basis, with the chairmanship rotated between the three Western military Commandants quarterly.<sup>44</sup> The senior foreign service officer representing each nation in the city acted as the national Deputy Commandant. The Kommandatura retained veto power over West Berlin city government legislation and the authority to take any action necessary to carry out its tripartite responsibility for law and order.

In 1951 the Kommandatura organized the Allied Staff, Berlin, a tripartite agency with offices at the British headquarters to coordinate its activities and to develop its contingency plans. The Allied Staff, Berlin reported to a special planning agency in Paris, which in turn was subordinate

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to a policy group in Bonn.\*

The Soviets abolished the Soviet Commandant's office in East Berlin on 22 August 1962 and transferred responsibility for military autobahn traffic and the Spandau prison and Soviet War Memorial guard duties to the Commander in Chief, Group Soviet Forces, Germany (CGSFG) staff. An East German major general was appointed City Commandant of East Berlin.

## 2. The Berlin Blockade Crisis of 1948-1949

### Prelude:

The US Armed Forces Occupation Plan for Germany, nicknamed Eclipse, did not mention traffic operations between the West and East zones of occupation or provide for United States reaction in the event of Soviet interference with Western access to Berlin.<sup>45</sup> Instances of Soviet interference with interzonal traffic occurred with mounting frequency during 1947 and early 1948, and finally assumed the aspects of a "creeping" blockade. They were accompanied by a rising flood of rumors that the United States would withdraw its troops from Berlin. Typically, the Soviets signaled their coming effort to force the Western Allies out of the city by charges that the Western powers were planning to merge their Berlin sectors with the already consolidated Western occupation zones.

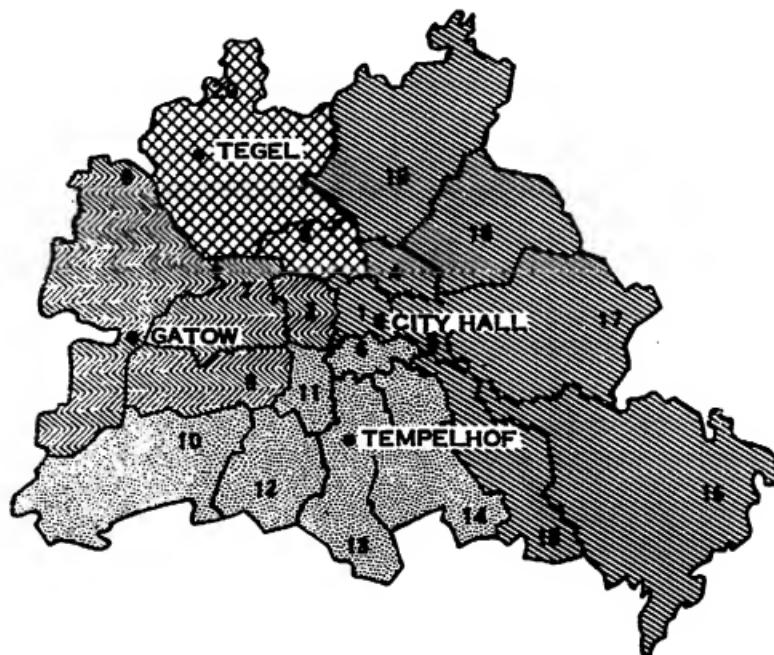
The regulation of German passengers on interzonal trains was tightened by the Soviets in January 1948. Soviet representatives in the Allied Control Council submitted proposals on 14 March which, had they been accepted, would probably have precluded aerial resupply of Berlin. In essence, these Soviet proposals would have prohibited proficiency flying and night flights in the air corridors to Berlin and prevented Western power aircraft from using Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) while "operating in clouds," except for descents at Tempelhof Airport. The Western power rejection noted that the existing air corridor

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\* See Part III, Contingency Planning for Berlin, this study.

# GREATER BERLIN

## SHOWING SECTOR BOUNDARIES AND WEST BERLIN AIRFIELDS



### THE BOROUGHS OF GREATER BERLIN

-  U.S. SECTOR
-  SOVIET SECTOR
-  BRITISH SECTOR
-  FRENCH SECTOR

1. MITTE	11. SCHÖNEBERG
2. TIERGARTEN	12. STEGLITZ
3. WEDDING	13. TEMPELHOF
4. PRENZLAUER BERG	14. NEUKÖLLN
5. FRIEDRICHSHAIN	15. TREPTOW
6. KREUZBERG	16. KÖPENICK
7. CHARLOTTENBURG	17. LICHTENBERG
8. SPANDAU	18. WEISSENSEE
9. WILMERSDORF	19. PANKOW
10. ZEHLENDORF	20. REINICKENDORF

Figure 3

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agreement clearly specified their use by Western aircraft with "full freedom of action," and that the suggested changes in flight rules would not improve flight safety.

On 31 March, the Russians announced new control checks for passengers and baggage on Western military trains passing through the Soviet zone, effective 1 April 1948. The US Military Governor, General Clay, ordered the US Army train personnel to prevent Soviet inspection by shooting if necessary, but this was modified by Washington to specify the use of arms only in self defense. This policy was also adopted by the British. The French, however, were less firm. When Soviet control point guards forced the military train inspection issue early in April, the United States responded by halting its rail operations to Berlin.

An airlift of perishable subsistence items for the United States garrison in Berlin was begun by the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE).<sup>46</sup> The airlift plan drawn up on 4 April called for a maximum daily resupply of 80 tons, plus passengers and mail. Operating from Rhein-Main Air Base in West Germany, USAFE C-47 aircraft flew this "Milk Run" to Berlin for 11 days until Soviet relaxation of the rail restrictions permitted its termination. Meantime, no effort was made to halt a personnel reduction underway at Berlin's Tempelhof Airport.

Again on 10 June, the Soviets stopped five Berlin bound coal trains at the British-Soviet zonal border on the grounds that their papers did not specify the Berlin station destinations. Two days later the Soviet-controlled press in Berlin announced closure of the Helmstedt-Berlin autobahn "to permit repair of the bridge over the Elbe river." On 21 June, the Russians attempted to reassert their right to inspect a United States military train at the Marienborn checkpoint, and some 48 hours later they returned the train forcibly to the West zone border.

The Soviets on 24 June stopped all traffic across the East zone, cut off most of the Western sector electricity service from an East sector power station "due to technical difficulties," and froze deposits in the centralized Berlin

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banking facility. Shipment of food from the East zone to the Western sectors was banned. They made no formal announcement of these moves but disseminated the facts via their controlled press and radio media. These media were also employed throughout the blockade to conduct a war of nerves consisting of rumors about food and water shortages, threatened epidemics, Red Army maneuvers outside the city, Western power withdrawal plans, and so forth. This intimidation campaign was supported by Communist street demonstrations and Soviet terrorist actions against the city's officials and citizens.

The garrison resupply plan of April had again been put into action by USAFE between 19 June and 23 June. In the absence of basic United States policy decisions on the Soviet blockade, the US Military Governor directed the Commander in Chief, US Air Forces in Europe (CINCUSAFE)\* to expand the garrison "Milk Run" operation to cover the resupply of West Berlin's 2.2 million citizens. Thus, on 26 June 1948, the aerial lifeline to Berlin - officially designated as Operation VITTLES by the US Air Force and Operation PLAIN FARE by the British - was inaugurated by USAFE C-47 transport planes carrying 80 tons of supplies to Berlin. Commonly known as the "Berlin Airlift," this modest start was to grow into the biggest aerial resupply operation in history.

Airlift Decisions and Planning: Many of the Soviet Union's tactics and techniques during the Berlin blockade of 1948-1949 were to reappear in later Berlin crises. This first major confrontation in Berlin, however, must be viewed within the context of the international situation at that time. In substance, the Russian challenge of the Western power occupation status in Berlin caught the United States squarely on the horns of a dilemma.

The United States in 1948 was almost totally unprepared for an East-West power struggle over Berlin.<sup>47</sup> American authorities in Berlin and the government policy

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\* Lieutenant General (later General) Curtis E. LeMay.

makers in Washington had formulated no real alternatives to the immediate postwar policy of "getting along with the Russians" through negotiation, compromise, and agreement. The United States had retained almost none of its World War II conventional strength while failing to decide under what circumstances its atomic weapons monopoly should be employed. The Soviet Union, moreover, was perfectly aware of this fundamental United States dilemma.

War Department planners in 1948 pointed out the inescapable fact that Berlin was militarily indefensible; 3,000 American, 2,000 British, and 1,500 French troops in Berlin were faced by 18,000 Red Army troops in East Berlin and surrounded by 300,000 additional Soviet troops stationed in East Germany. Too, a majority of the US Military Government officials in Berlin were pessimistic about both the will and the capability of the Western powers to remain in Berlin.

The crucial decision that the United States would maintain its occupation rights in Berlin was made by President Harry S. Truman on 28 June 1948.<sup>48</sup> He declared that the American occupation force was in Berlin by four power agreement and the Russians "had no right to get us out by either direct or indirect pressure." President Truman said the Berlin situation would be dealt with as it developed. In the meantime, he authorized the deployment of a token force of B-29's to Germany. \*

Nevertheless, the United States policy on Berlin continued to be hamstrung by high level indecision about how the Western powers could stay in the city without risking expansion of the blockade crisis into a general war. The French position did not preclude a withdrawal of the Allied garrisons from Berlin under suitable terms, while the United States insisted that the quadripartite agreed

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\* US Air Forces in Europe had been scaled down to a handful of fighter and air transport units with its 18,000 personnel in early 1948 programmed for reduction to 7,500.

right of the Western Allies to be in Berlin was not negotiable. The British wavered between these two positions. Time consuming consultations to reconcile these views in July 1948 finally achieved a general acceptance of the fact that the United States must either stand firm in Berlin or witness the failure of the rest of its European position.

In brief, it was decided that the United States would exert every effort to negotiate a settlement with the Soviet Union while still remaining in Berlin. The Western Allied bargaining power was to be strengthened as much as possible without provoking the Russians to take stronger actions. Therefore, no attempt would be made to break the total ground access blockade of Berlin by force.\* The airlift to Berlin would be expanded because this was less likely to lead to war. Nonetheless, the airlift was visualized only as a means of gaining time for negotiations and not as an instrument for breaking the Soviet blockade.

Similarly, a National Security Council decision in mid-July 1948 to send two B-29 Groups to Great Britain was conceived primarily as a measure to: (a) underline for the American public the serious view of the Berlin situation taken by the United States government, (b) provide the US Air Force with operational experience and the British with experience in accommodating B-29 forces, and (c) set a precedent for the future. This decision had to overcome the reluctance of the US Secretary of State to concur in "an action which the British and American publics might consider provocative." The B-29 deployment to England on 17 July 1948 was termed "a routine training exercise," but it led to the establishment of Strategic Air Command and USAFE-Third Air Force bases that were still in existence 17 years later.

The US Air Force capability to supply West

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\* Recommended several times by General Clay, but there were only two Army divisions in the Continental United States, and only one of these more or less ready, to back up such an action.

Berlin was under-estimated by virtually all of the United States policy makers in 1948.<sup>49</sup> President Truman viewed the airlift as a means of "stretching" existing rations in Berlin a little longer to gain time for a diplomatic solution to the blockade. The US Berlin Commandant, General Howley, "could not quite visualize how planes could supply 920,000 German families." Even the Air Force planners apparently did not fully appreciate the airlift's potential. Moreover, the Air Staff and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) were understandably reluctant to commit almost all of the United States military airlift resources to an operation where destruction of the transport aircraft by the Russians could cripple the American general war capability.

In short, the prevailing American concept in the summer of 1948 was that West Berlin's 2.2 million people could be supplied by air for at most 30 to 60 days. Accordingly, the original Berlin Airlift Task Force was established at Wiesbaden on 29 June to operate for an estimated 45 days.

Airlift Operations: By early 1948, when access to the city was unhampered, about 20,000 tons of imports daily reached Berlin by road, rail, and barge.<sup>50</sup> The Western powers had about 36 days supply of food and 30 days supply of coal and other vital items stockpiled in Berlin when the blockade struck. The Western Commandant planning staffs estimated that 4,500 tons daily were the minimum to sustain the Berlin civil population together with the 20,000 military and dependent garrison force, and to provide essential industries with sufficient materiel for partial operation under strict rationing. They also estimated that Berlin would require a minimum 21-day reserve of vital commodities, mainly food and coal. After a number of much lower estimates, the airlift planners in West Germany established a maximum aerial resupply goal of an average of 8,000 tons daily requiring 225 C-54 transport aircraft.

The Berlin aerial resupply operation was begun with the available USAFE C-47's carrying about 2.5 tons each in a two hour flight to Berlin. The C-47 transports were gradually replaced by bigger capacity aircraft - mostly C-54's lifting up to 10 tons of cargo. At the height of the operation, the airlift utilized between 209 and 228 US Air

Force and US Navy aircraft plus British Tudor and York transports, and special fuel tanker planes.

The Russians at first appeared confident that they could outlast the Western power resupply effort.<sup>51</sup> As the airlift of food, clothing, medicines, coal and raw materials began to grow, however, and the West Berliners showed no sign of bowing to the Soviet pressures, the Russian authorities made several conciliatory gestures. The Soviet Commander in Chief, Germany, expressed a "hope" that the rail line from West Germany could be repaired before the food stocks in West Berlin were exhausted. He added:

For my part, I appreciate the measures which . . . are being taken so energetically by British and American authorities to maintain communications with West Berlin by air. I hope that the air safety regulations will be fully and carefully observed.

Meanwhile, there was no slackening in the Communist press campaign of attempted intimidation by threats and rumors or in the "protective" measures taken by the Soviets against the influx of Western currency. The Soviet representatives officially withdrew from the Allied Kommandatura on 1 July 1948 and informed the Western occupation powers that the quadripartite administration of Berlin was at an end. The Western military governors forced an admission from their Soviet opposite number at Potsdam, for the first time, that the "technical difficulties" blocking Western ground access to Berlin would continue until the Western powers abandoned their plan to re-establish a West German government.<sup>52</sup> The currency problem was not even mentioned.

A Combined Airlift Task Force was set up on 15 October 1948 to direct an Anglo-American operation rapidly growing to gigantic proportions. Flying weather was near or below minimums during much of November and December. West Berlin's vital coal stocks dwindled to a 19-day reserve.<sup>53</sup> On a calculated risk basis, food lift was reduced to gain coal tonnage. Improved weather in early

1949 coupled with the addition of Tegel airfield in the French sector to the American Tempelhof and British Gatow airfields in West Berlin permitted a buildup of the city's coal reserves before the food supplies became critical.

The new Tegel airfield was built by the United States engineers and German labor and opened to traffic on 1 December 1948. The Tempelhof terminal capabilities were boosted by two additional asphalt runways, expanded taxiways and aprons, and improved flight facilities. Thereafter, the airlift tonnages rose steadily. (Figure 4). Almost 200,000 tons of supplies were lifted into Berlin in March 1949 and more than 235,000 tons during April.

Airlift transports returning from Berlin supported the city's export economy, lifting about half a million West Marks worth of West Berlin's products to West Germany in March 1949 and more than double that amount in April. They also flew some 5,000 tons of parts and equipment into the city to restore to operation a West sector utilities services power plant stripped by the Soviets in 1945.

United States and Soviet talks in the preceding two months culminated on 5 May 1949 in the New York Agreement lifting the restrictions imposed by the Soviet Union on commerce, transport, and trade between West Berlin and the Western occupation zones since March 1948, effective on 12 May.<sup>54</sup> The Western Allies nonetheless continued the airlift to Berlin for four months thereafter to build up several months' stocks of vital commodities in the city.

The last of the Berlin airlift's 77,569 sorties and 92,061,862 plane miles were flown at the end of September 1949.<sup>55</sup> By that time, the 16-month operation had carried 2,325,293 short tons of materiel plus 277,655 passengers with the loss of 31 American lives in 70 major and 56 minor aircraft accidents. USAFE's costs for the airlift amounted to \$137,177,427 - or, as one official said: "enough to build two United Nations buildings."

Soviet Interference Efforts: There had been several indications early in the Berlin airlift that the Soviets

### BERLIN AIRLIFT TONNAGES

<u>1948</u>	<u>US</u>	<u>BRITISH</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
June	1,199.0	205.0	1,404
July	39,971.0	29,034.7	69,055
August	73,658.1	45,344.5	119,002
September	101,846.7	37,776.2	139,622
October	115,792.2	31,788.6	147,580
November	87,979.3	26,888.6	114,867
December	114,567.2	25,291.9	139,859
<u>1949</u>			
January	139,218.8	32,740.4	171,959
February	120,394.6	31,846.1	152,240
March	154,475.0	41,685.7	196,160
April	189,957.2	45,406.5	235,363
May	192,271.4	58,547.1	250,818
June	182,722.9	57,602.1	240,325
July	201,572.2	51,557.8	253,130
August	55,940.0	21,818.6	77,758
September	12,047.1	4,104.1	16,151
<u>United States:</u>			<u>Grand Total: 2,325,293 Tons</u>
Food	296,319.3		
Coal	1,421,158.8		
Other	66,134.6		
Total	1,783,612.7		

SOURCE: USAFE and The Berlin Airlift, 1948-1949.

Figure 4

Figure 5

## SOVIET HARASSMENT

Aug 48 - Aug 49

	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
Searchlights				3	7	10	20	25	20	5	5	6	2	103
Close Flying	1	1	1			5	1	25	10	1	21	24	6	96
Radio Interference				2	18	35	8	7	2	2	1	7		82
Buzzing	2	5	1	3	4	5	2	26	12	5	7	4	1	77
Flares				1	2	7	8	14	2	9	5	7	4	59
Ground Fire				3	4	5	5	10	4	6	8	9	1	55
Chemical Laying							1		33	20				54
Flak				3	2	6	3	14	4	6	9	5	2	54
Air/Ground Fire						1	2	6	8	4	3	15	3	42
Ground Explosions					1	7	5	5	4	5	2	9	1	39
Bombing							3	3	1	2	25	2		36
Air to Air Firing				1			2	5	3			3		14
Balloons							1	5	3			2		11
Rockets						3						1		4
Unidentified Objects					1			2			1			7
Total Incidents by Month	3	6	2	17	38	84	60	145	108	65	66	117	22	733

SOURCE: Berlin Airlift, a USAFE Summary, 26 June 1948 - 30 September 1949, UNCLASSIFIED.

might try to actively interfere with the operation, and heavy Soviet fighter activity in the air corridors forced the Anglo-American controllers in the Berlin Air Safety Center to warn all pilots to stay well within the corridors and above 5,000 feet.<sup>56</sup> In reply to a United States diplomatic protest of interference with the air traffic to Berlin, the Soviet Union on 6 July 1948 charged that: (a) the United States had unilaterally decided to violate the agreed occupation power air traffic regulations, and (b) the Soviet Element in the BASC was receiving insufficient information about the United States traffic in the Berlin air corridors.

Early in July, four Soviet officers appeared at the BASC to protest the "violation of air traffic regulations by American planes." On 10 July, the Soviets sent a letter to the Western Commandants charging failure by the Anglo-American airlift pilots to observe "the elementary rules of flight safety," and suggesting that these "irregular flights" be stopped immediately. The United States was also advised that Soviet aircraft would fly under IFR at two points along the Frankfurt-Berlin corridor without prior notice to the BASC. The Soviets were informed by the United States that the Soviet pilots would make such flights at their own risk.

As the Western power airlift expanded, Soviet efforts to interfere with this traffic were also intensified. The Russians buzzed airlift transports with fighter aircraft, conducted air gunnery and bombing practice in or near the corridors, as well as anti-aircraft firing and other types of "military exercises." (Figure 5). They constantly filed protests in the BASC alleging Western air corridor and flight safety violations and threatening to force down all aircraft flying outside the corridors or any "unmarked aircraft" inside or outside these airlanes.

The Soviet Element informed USAF representatives in the BASC on 10 September 1948 that the air corridors to Berlin had been established by "Soviet command," and not by four power agreement.<sup>57</sup> However, this claim was never repeated. Soviet notes on 18 September and 25 September emphasized "the necessity of the other three

military governors complying strictly with the regulations imposed by the Control Council's decision of November 30, 1945, on the traffic needs of the occupation forces." The Western powers responded that corridor traffic was not limited to garrison resupply flights, and that all of the occupation forces were free to use these airlanes subject only to the agreed air safety rules.

In October 1948 the Soviets began claiming in oral and written statements that the air traffic procedures for the Berlin corridors were never ratified by either the Allied Control Council or its Coordinating Committee and were, therefore, without legal force.\* None of the questions raised about the legal basis of the Berlin air corridors by the Soviets were considered by the Western occupation powers as having any substance.

Diplomatic Negotiations: The ground blockade of Berlin was protested in a Western power diplomatic note to the Soviet Union on 6 July 1948 as a clear violation of the existing agreements on the administration of Berlin by the four occupying powers.<sup>58</sup> The Western powers said they were willing to discuss disagreements about Berlin's administration, but only after the blockade was lifted. The Soviet reply on 14 July blamed the Western powers for violating quadripartite agreements, as reflected in the currency reform and the "dismemberment" of Germany; refused termination of the blockade as a negotiating condition, and asserted that Berlin was a part of the Soviet zone. The Soviet note further contended that Berlin must be discussed as part of the whole German problem and that, by violating agreed decisions about Berlin's administration, the Western powers had forfeited their right to participate in the occupation of the city.

Prolonged negotiations between United States representatives and Soviet leaders in Moscow during July

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\* For discussion of the legal basis for Berlin flight operations, see Part II, Air Access Operations, this study.

and August 1948 achieved no agreement on the four power administration of Berlin. They did achieve an accord on 30 August wherein the four power Military Commandants in Berlin were directed to negotiate a lifting of the blockade in return for a withdrawal of the Western-sponsored currency and use of the Soviet East Mark in all of Berlin. However, the subsequent four power Berlin Commandant meetings proved futile because the Russians insisted upon complete currency control as well as certain restrictions on civil air traffic between the Western occupation zones of Germany and Berlin. Also, the Communist attacks upon the Berlin administration continued and the City Assembly was driven out of the Soviet sector by terrorist tactics on 6 September.

During the remainder of 1948, the Soviets gave no sign of being in a hurry to negotiate a solution to the blockade of Berlin. They evidently felt confident that the blockade would bring the Western Allies and the West Berliners to their knees in time. When they realized that the Western powers would stick to their decision on the formation of a West German government, the Soviets speeded their actions to tighten the blockade, to consolidate communist control in East Germany, and to detach and seal-off the Soviet sector of Berlin from the rest of the city.

East-West diplomatic exchanges were continued. The four powers traded numerous aide-memoires\* and a United Nations Security Council attempt to arbitrate the Berlin dispute was stymied by a Russian veto.

The Western powers progressively clamped down on traffic from the Soviet zone through West Berlin and they stiffened other counter-blockade measures. The Moscow Agreement of 30 August 1948 was repudiated by the United States on 1 January 1949, precluding further Soviet gains from continued negotiations on the problem of currency reform.

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\* The Western Allies rejected a Soviet Aide Memoire of 18 September 1948 which asserted the Berlin air corridors were only for the resupply of the Western military garrisons.

West Berlin's economy was shifted to exclusive use of the West Mark. The Soviet zone East Mark rapidly depreciated in value to about 30 percent of the original legally established parity.

As noted earlier,<sup>\*</sup> the New York Agreement of 5 May 1949 and its later reaffirmation by the Foreign Minister's meeting at Paris did not erase the de facto split of the quadripartite Berlin control agencies and the sector administrations accomplished by the Soviets prior to and during the blockade of 1948-1949. Nor did these accords restrain the Soviet Union thereafter from breaking its repeated pledges of unrestricted Western access to Berlin.

In fact, the Soviet restrictions on traffic to and within Berlin did not entirely cease on 12 May 1949. The four Commandants met on 12 July to discuss a modus vivendi under the New York Agreement.<sup>59</sup> They had only a short, unsatisfactory meeting during which the Russians refused to discuss the fact that truck traffic was still not moving into Berlin. As early as January 1950, the Soviets were resuming serious harassment of Berlin's road, rail, and water traffic.

### 3. The Soviet Ultimatum of 1958

Diplomatic Background: There was mounting evidence during 1958 that the Soviet Union and its satellite East German regime were laying the groundwork for the most serious challenge of the Western Allied presence in Berlin since the blockade crises of 1948-1949.<sup>60</sup> As in the past, the Soviet-East German threats to unilaterally abolish the quadripartite administration of Berlin, and to choke-off Western access to the island of freedom which West Berlin constituted in Soviet-dominated East Germany, were pitched to a rising crescendo of propaganda and supported by a number of direct actions during the year.

The coming Soviet resort to crisis management.

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\* Page 20, this study.

as a tool for achieving the Communist goal in Berlin had been clearly signaled by an East German Communist party official in December 1957:<sup>61</sup>

We will carry out our plans to secure East Berlin against intercity and interzonal traffic / regardless of what the West Berliners like. Anyway, our Soviet friends intend to choke off the American's air, and to occupy West Berlin in March or April 1958.

Specific Communist actions during 1958 designed to achieve the Soviet Union's announced ends in Berlin and in Germany as a whole included repeated attempts by the East German regime to establish a legal basis for terminating the occupation of West Berlin by the Western Allies. Harassment of the city's access routes from the West was increased with the immediate goal of forcing the Western powers to recognize the German Democratic Republic's "sovereignty." A series of increasingly bellicose declarations at governmental level and below culminated in a speech by Soviet Premier Nikita Khruschev in November to the effect that the Soviet Union "... had resolved ... to abolish the occupation regime in Berlin."<sup>62</sup>

Official and explicit abrogation of the Four Power 1949 New York Agreement which lifted the Berlin blockade was announced by the Soviet Commandant in Berlin on 13 September 1958. He stated flatly that the German Democratic Republic was the competent authority to deal with the Western Allies on all matters affecting Berlin and East Germany. This assertion of the GDR's sovereignty echoed many others made by the Soviet Commandant as early as 1955 when, for example, the United States Commandant had protested the detention of two American congressmen by East German police.

In a speech at Moscow's Lenin Stadium on 10 November 1958, the Soviet Premier charged that the Western powers had violated the Potsdam Agreement of 2 August 1945, and that the occupation of Berlin was the only portion of this agreement observed by them. He demanded that

Berlin be proclaimed a "free city," and that the Allies negotiate directly with the GDR on the withdrawal of their military forces from the city. If an agreement to that end was not concluded by 27 May 1959, Khrushchev said that the Soviet Union would "effect the planned measures by an agreement with the German Democratic Republic."

In a diplomatic note on 27 November, the Soviet Union, after accusing the Western powers of having "long since rejected the essentials of the treaties and agreements concluded during and after the war," formally announced that it considered all the 1944 and 1945 agreements on Germany to be null and void. It demanded the withdrawal of all military forces from West Berlin. Although insisting that the "most correct and natural solution" to the Berlin problem would be the absorption of West Berlin into the GDR, the Soviets proposed that West Berlin be converted into "an independent political unit - a free city . . . demilitarized . . . which<sup>7</sup> could have its own government and run its own economic, administrative, and other affairs." If agreement to this effect could not be reached within six months, the Soviet Union "would carry out the planned measures through an agreement with the GDR."

When the "planned measures" were implemented, all official contacts between the Soviet and Allied military and governmental officials associated with the occupation status of Germany or Berlin were to cease. Accordingly, the Soviet Kommandatura and guard detachments in East Berlin would be removed and complete sovereignty on land, on the sea, and in the air, would be handed over to the GDR. Since the Soviet Union considered it necessary for the Allied occupying powers to negotiate these matters with the GDR, it offered its good offices for these negotiations.

The Soviet note of 27 November 1958 tacitly admitted that the occupation rights of the Western powers did not rest upon the Potsdam Agreement - as claimed in Khrushchev's speech of 10 November. None of this accord's 21 Articles referred to Berlin or to its Four Power status:<sup>63</sup>

... the Government of the USSR ... regards as null and void the 'protocol' of the agreement between the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom of the Occupation Zones of Germany and on the Administration of Greater Berlin' dated September 12, 1944, and the associated and supplementary agreements.

The United States position outlined in a US State Department Memorandum on 19 December considered that the existing Four Power agreements on the occupation of Berlin remained in full force and that the "attempts by the Soviet Union to undermine the rights of the United States to be in Berlin and to have access thereto are in violation of international law." A NATO communique issued on 16 December reminded the Soviet Union that no state had the right to withdraw unilaterally from its international agreements: denunciation by the Soviets of the Four Power agreements on Berlin and its access routes would in no way deprive the other parties of their rights, or relieve the Soviet Union of its obligations.

Diplomatic notes from the Western Allies to the Soviet Union in December 1958 rejected the Soviet proposals on Berlin and suggested a Four Power discussion of the city's status within the context of the overall issues of Germany and European security.<sup>64</sup> On 10 January 1959 the Soviets suggested a 28-nation conference including FRG and GDR delegates to draft a peace treaty that would postpone German reunification indefinitely and transform West Berlin into a "free city" pending this reunification. After further diplomatic bickering over the status of West and East German attendees, the Soviet Union agreed on 19 March to a Four Power foreign ministers meeting in May. The meeting opened at Geneva on 11 May 1959, and 16 days later the Soviet ultimatum deadline quietly expired.

The Western powers offered significant concessions at this conference. The Soviets offered only an additional extension of the 27 May deadline for changes in Berlin's status and a readiness to discuss the problem of Germany

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at a Summit Conference. When the Geneva conference ended on 5 August 1959, the opposing East-West positions had not been modified, and there was no agreement on any matter of substance.

Access Implications: The Soviets had begun serious harassment of US Army convoys with various inspection demands at the Berlin autobahn checkpoint in November 1956, <sup>\*</sup> resulting in suspension of these operations for nearly six months. <sup>65</sup> This inspection harassment was resumed by the Soviets late in March 1958 and the Army convoy movements were stopped until Commander in Chief, US Army, Europe (CINCUSAREUR) reached an agreement with the Soviet Commander in Chief. However, in June Soviet checkpoint officials rejected the agreed procedure and thereafter let some convoys through but turned others back. One convoy was immobilized by the Soviets for nine hours during November.

Although there had generally been less Soviet interference with United States rail traffic than with highway access to Berlin over the years, the Soviets in 1956 had made a number of forced changes in the procedures at the Marienborn checkpoint. During 1957, the attachment of freight cars to the United States passenger trains to Berlin was protested, a mail car was confiscated for several days, and a West German mail car was detained at the checkpoint. In January 1958, the Soviets forced the United States to accept more detailed and time-consuming rail checkpoint procedures.

The threat to Allied air access to Berlin implicit in the Soviet Union's announced intention in 1958 that it would transfer access route control to the GDR was a prime Western power concern. <sup>66</sup> They were confident that the Allied garrisons in the city could be supplied almost indefinitely by airlift in the event that Soviet-GDR actions culminated in a surface blockade, but the West Berlin population could not be sustained at its existing economic level through

\* See Part II, this study.

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airlift.\*

The Soviet declarations in November 1958 raised two sharp issues of direct and constant concern to the United States Air Forces in Europe. The first of these issues was the relatively narrow but crucial one of Western access to Berlin. This access had suffered from continuous Soviet attempts to limit and finally destroy it. Control of the access routes by the East German regime, which the Western Powers did not recognize, contained the threat of a new blockade. The second, and broader issue was the whole question of the Western commitments in Berlin and the responsibility to achieve German reunification with Berlin as the capital. The Soviet threat to transfer occupation authority to the German Democratic Republic represented a unilateral abrogation of those responsibilities, with unforeseeable consequences to the deterrent United States position in Europe and to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

American authorities in Europe had no doubts about the objectives of the Soviet actions in 1958 in relation to de facto recognition of the puppet East German regime. There was not complete tripartite agreement, however, on the probable results of such a recognition.

#### 4. The Berlin Crisis in 1961

The Soviet Ultimatum: The Berlin crisis of 1961 was touched off when Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev convinced President John F. Kennedy in meetings at Vienna on 4-5 June that, should the West persist in rejecting the Soviet terms for converting West Berlin into a "free city" deprived of its protective Western troop garrisons, he would sign a separate peace treaty with the East German regime before the end of the year.<sup>67</sup> This new Soviet ultimatum threatened to proclaim this treaty as binding international law which would abrogate Western power rights in Berlin and open the way for GDR control of the city's access routes.

\* See Part III, Contingency Planning for Berlin, this study, for discussion of airlift and other Berlin contingency planning 1945-1965.

The two heads of state talked for more than eight hours in Vienna but ended in a head-on collision of opposing views.<sup>68</sup> Khrushchev presented a Soviet aide memoire to President Kennedy charging the Western Allies with delaying a German peace treaty which would provide the only firm guarantee against renewed West German "militarism." As for Berlin, there seemed "no better solution" than its conversion into a "demilitarized free city." Upon the conclusion of a German peace treaty, whether it was signed with "both German states" or only with the GDR "inside whose territory Berlin lies," all occupation rights in West Berlin would end.

Mr. Kennedy told Khrushchev that he was less concerned about a Soviet-GDR peace treaty than about the Soviet interpretation that such a treaty would irrevocably make West Berlin part of East Germany. This, he warned, was not acceptable to the United States. Khrushchev replied that the Soviet Union would proceed with its planned actions in December 1961 even if they were not acceptable to the United States. If the United States wanted to go to war over Berlin, "force would be met with force."

In a television appearance during June, Khrushchev was even more threatening.<sup>69</sup> He said that a peace settlement in Europe must be accomplished "this year." After signature of the Soviet-GDR peace treaty, the GDR could cut off the supply corridors to West Berlin if it pleased. Any Western attempt to force a passage to Berlin "would mean war - and thermonuclear war at that."

East Germany's Walter Ulbricht in a press conference in June demanded liquidation of the refugee camps in West Berlin, the Radio in the American Sector (RIAS)radio station, and Tempelhof Central Airport.<sup>70</sup> "The present danger, noise, and nuisance of low flying planes over central districts of Berlin must cease," he said. Except for such "minor" restrictions, West Berlin access by the Western powers would continue after negotiations with the GDR for permission to use these routes.

Despite President Kennedy's pledge to hold fast in Berlin "at any risk," not all Western officials were united in this stand.<sup>71</sup> Western press media reported that some

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

39

"important" Anglo-American advisors favored recognition of the GDR in return for a "permanent arrangement" in Berlin. Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield suggested a "third way" to resolve the Berlin dispute whereby both West and East Berlin would be converted into one free city held in trust by international authority. The President let it be known, however, that he did not agree with this proposal.

The United States replied on 18 July to the Soviet Aide Memoire of 4 June 1961.<sup>72</sup> This diplomatic note rejected the Soviet Union's contention that it could unilaterally deprive the other three participants in the joint occupation of Berlin of their basic rights in the city, and that Berlin was "situated in the territory of the so-called German Democratic Republic." With respect to Soviet claims that the "Free City" of Berlin would be able to maintain free communications with the outside world and continue its domestic order by the free expression of the will of its people, the United States noted Ulbricht's statements that his regime would seek to close Tempelhof Airport and the refugee centers in West Berlin..

The United States note of 18 July further said:<sup>73</sup>

The immediate cause of this threat to peace arises from the announced intention of the Soviet Government to present the three Western powers with a de facto situation based on the false assertion that they would no longer be entitled to remain in Berlin, or to have free access thereto. Such a move could lead to highly dangerous developments and would be totally devoid of legal effect. The United States considers the exercise of its rights together with its British and French Allies in order to maintain the freedom of over two million people in West Berlin, a fundamental political and moral obligation.

The Soviet reply in a diplomatic note to the Western powers on 3 August 1961 remained firm in the demands for settlement of the Berlin issue on Soviet terms.<sup>74</sup> However, the Soviet ultimatum of 1961 was subsequently

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superseded by the ultimate Kennedy-Khrushchev confrontation over Cuba in the following year. Nevertheless, the erection of the dividing wall between East and West Berlin in August 1961 clearly constituted a further Communist advance towards its goal in Berlin. Also, as noted earlier,\* Khrushchev signed a separate peace treaty with the GDR in 1964, but did not directly challenge the Western occupation and free access rights.

Soviet attacks upon the Western power presence in Berlin through unceasing propaganda, rumors, threats, and subversive activities again reached a high pitch during 1961.<sup>75</sup> Also, there were continuous rumors from behind the Iron Curtain that various deadlines had been set for Soviet interruption of Berlin air traffic.

US Armed Forces Augmentation: In a second State of the Union Address on 25 May 1961, President Kennedy had announced plans to reorganize and modernize the US Army and asked Congress for an additional \$100 Million in Fiscal Year 1962 defense funds.<sup>76</sup> Following the Vienna talks, he directed many other actions to bolster the United States military posture, through partial mobilization of reserve forces, examination of the civil defense program, and modernization and augmentation of the US Armed Forces, particularly in the NATO area. The President told the American people that: ". . . so long as the Communists insist that they are preparing to end by themselves unilaterally our rights in West Berlin and our commitments to its people, we must be prepared to defend those rights and those commitments."

During August 1961, President Kennedy obtained Congressional authority to call to active duty some 250,000 Ready Reservists of all the military services. Some 55 Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve units were recalled during October and November amounting to over 27,000 personnel. In November 1961, seven Air National Guard tactical fighter squadrons, a tactical reconnaissance squadron, and a tactical control group deployed to USAFE bases in France and Germany. Later in the year, three F-104

\* Page 16, this study.

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41

fighter interceptor squadrons were added to the Air National Guard augmentation forces stationed in the NATO area. The deployed Air National Guard force was returned to the United States in the autumn of 1962 for demobilization.

US Army in Europe (USAREUR) troop strength was similarly strengthened in the autumn of 1961 with an additional 37,000 personnel, including a fourth armored cavalry regiment.<sup>77</sup> Also, USAREUR began rotating a reinforcing battle group into Berlin on 90-days tour in conjunction with a series of strategic mobility exercises in the 1961-1962 time period known as LONG THRUST. The first of these Berlin garrison augmentation units in August 1961 was met by the then Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson and thousands of cheering Berliners. USAREUR strength was cut-back again by the end of 1962, and the 600-man reinforcement battalion in West Berlin was withdrawn during January 1965. Public announcements at that time set the United States Berlin garrison strength at about 6,000 troops, including three mechanized infantry battalions, armor, self-propelled artillery, combat engineer, and other support units.\*

US Command Arrangements in Berlin: Both the US State Department and the Department of Defense (DOD) had certain responsibilities in Berlin in the 1960's.<sup>78</sup> The State Department functioned through the US Ambassador to Germany, who was also in charge of the US Mission, Berlin. The DOD responsibilities were largely delegated to the United States Commander in Chief, Europe (USCINCEUR) and in turn to the CINCUSAREUR. These political and military functions were combined in the office of the US Commander, Berlin, headed by an army major general.

As deputy chief of the US Mission, and as the senior military commander in Berlin, USCINCEUR operated under separate letters of instruction from the US Ambassador at Bonn and CINCUSAREUR. Together with his British and

\* Berlin garrison strengths cited in the US Army, Europe official record as of July 1964 were: 6,937 United States, 2,925 British and 2,616 French troops.

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French counterparts, who had similar dual responsibilities, USCOB in his capacity as the US Commandant in Berlin was responsible for the overall security and administration of Berlin.

The US Ambassador's letter of instructions directed USCOB to exercise all United States government functions in Berlin and to act as a member of the Allied Kommandatura. His CINCUSAREUR assigned military tasks were to defend Berlin, to support the US Mission Chief, and to regulate all United States road and rail access to the city.

Prior to 1961, a separate tactical element called the Berlin Brigade operated in the city generally under USCOB's supervision but reporting directly to CINCUSAREUR. The overlapping of USCOB and Berlin Command functions under the existing dual organization concept had been a matter of concern even before the Berlin crisis of 1961. As the crisis grew USAREUR directives to Berlin Command frequently impinged upon USCOB's responsibilities, and sometimes precluded the rapid reaction, execution of orders, and reporting of results demanded by the situation.

On 1 December, therefore, USAREUR carried out a reorganization and streamlining in Berlin to consolidate all US Army forces and communications channels into a single command responsible to CINCUSAREUR. The Office of the US Commander, Berlin was elevated to the status of a USAREUR major command and the USCOB became also the Commanding General, US Army, Berlin. Berlin Command was redesignated as the Berlin Brigade and reassigned to US Army, Berlin as a subordinate unit. The mission of the United States garrison units in Berlin and the USCOB's authority and responsibilities as the personal representative of the US Ambassador and CINCUSAREUR in Berlin remained unchanged.

Thus, as a single commander, USCOB had the US Mission staff and the Berlin Brigade as his instruments for carrying out his political and military responsibilities in Berlin. This unique arrangement, whereby a military commander exercised both United States foreign and defense policies, reflected the fact that in Berlin all major problems had both political and military implications.

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At the height of the Berlin crisis in September 1961, General Lucius D. Clay, USA (Retired), was appointed by the President as his personal representative in Berlin and the highest ranking United States official in the divided city.\* In February 1961, Headquarters USAFE had also closed a "command gap" in Berlin.<sup>79</sup>

Access Implications: After detaining a US Army convoy at the Berlin highway checkpoint for 54 hours early in February 1959, the Soviets had eased off somewhat on their harassment of this ground access route.<sup>80</sup> In late 1961, the Soviet checkpoint officials began a year-long harassment campaign based on voluntary concessions made by US Army convoy commanders during the preceding relatively relaxed period.\*\* The US Army augmentation group sent to Berlin in August had voluntarily dismounted its troops at both Berlin highway checkpoints and set a pattern for future large military convoys. By 1962, the Soviets had progressively advanced their checkpoint demands with the end result of numerous delays for US Army convoys moving to and from Berlin.

An East German announcement in June 1961, that a new GDR "law" containing "Instructions Concerning Aero-nautical Radio Service" effective 1 August would require all foreign aircraft to obtain GDR radio permission to enter or leave East German airspace, cast an ominous shadow on Soviet assurances of free access to Berlin following signature of a German peace treaty.<sup>81</sup> "Air Safety" was given as the reason for the proposed GDR overflight restrictions. The Soviet Union had repeatedly supported East German claims of sovereignty over East zone airspace, and the Ulbricht statements in June\*\*\* again warned the Western powers that this sovereignty would be exercised after the Soviet Union signed a separate peace treaty with the GDR.

Although the East German regime did not attempt

- \* General Clay subsequently returned to his civilian occupation.
- \*\* See Part II, Air Access Operations, this study.
- \*\*\* Page 38, this study.

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to enforce its aeronautical radio permission "law" on 1 August, a Soviet diplomatic note to the Western powers on 23 August reaffirmed the GDR air control authority claim and charged abuses of the existing occupation power agreements on the Berlin air corridors by the Western Allies. This Soviet note and its categoric rejection by a Western power reply on 26 August - viewed in conjunction with Communist erection of the wall sealing off East Berlin during that month - would seem in retrospect to have marked the high point of the Berlin crisis of 1961.

#### D. THE CRUCIAL NATURE OF AIR ACCESS

##### 1. The Wartime Decisions

Each time a Berlin crisis has arisen, the question of how the United States got into such an awkward position in the first place has been hotly debated.<sup>82</sup> Unquestionably, the decision on purely military grounds in March 1945 not to attempt the capture of Berlin was important. But it was important in terms of the whole postwar European political situation -as Winston Churchill had foreseen- rather than specifically in relation to the postwar "Berlin problem." As Generals Eisenhower and Clay have pointed out, the occupation zones of Germany had been fixed by a political decision before the military determination was made. Likewise, when Ambassador Winant agreed to the occupation zones in the London Protocols of September 1944 the Red armies were drawing up to the Oder River within striking distance of Berlin, while the Allied armies were still confronted by the Siegfried Line. Once the London Protocols were signed, the Red armies shifted their weight from their right flank, stopped the drive on Berlin and, changing the main axis, rolled up the Danube valley. Nonetheless, even in April 1945 the United States commander at the point of furthest advance toward Berlin before this drive was halted to avoid further loss of life did not believe that he could "get a main slice of Berlin ahead of the Russians."

American career diplomat, Robert Murphy, probably put his finger on the basic determinative point of the United States postwar situation in Berlin when he said of

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the European Advisory Committee recommendations as reflected in the London Protocols.<sup>83</sup>

The fateful decision about Berlin, made in London in September, 1944 was a personal decision based on the all-too-prevalent American theory that individual friendship can determine national policy. Soviet policy makers and diplomats never operate on that theory.

## 2. The Berlin Blockade Lessons

The United States was almost totally unprepared both psychologically and militarily for an East-West confrontation in Berlin in 1948.<sup>84</sup> There were no plans for the contingency of Soviet interference with Western Allied access to Berlin. In fact, the need for alternatives to "getting along with the Russians" in the occupation of Germany had never been envisaged. American officials took a firm stand in public announcements during the Berlin blockade crisis, but they were very divided on the Berlin issue. As a result, both President Truman and General Clay had to take crucial decisions to maintain the United States position in Berlin without the support of agreed staff recommendations.

Many of the Soviet pre-blockade moves were of a probing nature as if to test the Western power response. It seems likely that the relatively weak Western reaction to the "creeping" ground access blockade early in 1948 led the Russians to feel that they could safely impose the full blockade. Conversely, the Western Allies reacted strongly to air traffic interference and the Soviets did not seriously attempt to obstruct the air corridors to Berlin.

Soviet actions throughout the crisis of 1948-1949 were seldom entirely intransigent. Characteristically, they tried shortly before imposing the full blockade to reassure and pacify Western authorities who protested the "creeping blockade." They also made conciliatory justifications for almost every aggressive action, e. g., the Berlin autobahn had to be closed for "repairs," and measures to control Berlin traffic were "necessary to prevent black market

activities" or to "enforce existing regulations." These reasons were often specious and trivial, but they left a line of retreat open to the Soviets without sacrifice of principle.

Due to under-estimation of the airlift capability,\* the United States miscalculated the pressure it was under to negotiate a lifting of the blockade. Similarly, the Moscow Agreement of August 1948 was a classic example of an agreement for agreement's sake. Had the Berliners known and understood the terms of this accord, which the United States later had to repudiate, popular support of the Western position in Berlin would undoubtedly have diminished considerably.

Berlin's ground access was effectively blocked by the Soviets, but they were unable to curtail the airlift of 1948-1949 to any great extent. They possessed the technical capability to jam radio communications in the corridors, to interfere with Western radar, and to raise barrage balloons at strategic points to make bad weather operations highly dangerous. The fact that they did not resort to direct interference with the airlift which would have required a Western response by force, indicated that the Soviets did not want the Berlin crisis of 1948-1949 to lead to armed conflict.

The Western counter-blockade and the propaganda impact of the triumphant Allied airlift may have been factors in the Soviet decision to end the blockade. It seems more likely, however, that when the Soviet Union realized that the Western powers would give up neither Berlin nor their plans for a West German government, it proceeded to consolidate Communist control in East Germany and thereafter benefits from the blockade could only be minimal. Too, the blockade was fostering the unity and economic development of Western Europe which it had been designed to hamper.

The Berlin airlift had a number of wartime precedents, but as a peacetime operation it was unique.<sup>85</sup> Not

\* Even after the first week of airlift, estimates of the maximum Berlin resupply potential were less than one-fifth of the actual ultimate in-flow.

only was it an immense technical achievement, it prevented the Russians from taking over all of Berlin, it increased the prestige of the Western Allies throughout the world, and it opened a new era of cooperation between West Germany and the Western occupying powers.

The Berlin airlift was carried out principally with aircraft not primarily designed either for cargo or military purposes. It awakened the United States defense planners to the need for a strategic airlift force, and it spurred the development of military transport aircraft specifically designed for weight lifting, ease of loading, capaciousness, and power. It also resulted in the establishment of tripartite arrangements and agencies to continuously maintain supply stock piles in Berlin and to develop airlift and other contingency plans for Berlin.

After the Soviet blockade of 1948-1949 was ended, the three Western powers pledged their national honor to the defense of West Berlin.<sup>86</sup> Thereafter, the risks of any future Soviet blockade escalating into war were greater because airlift alone might seem too weak a Western response, and the only alternative to airlift would be direct force.

### 3. Implications of Soviet Access Harassment

It was often assumed prior to the 1960's that, if the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic again blockaded Berlin, they would concentrate on stopping ground access and limit their interference with air traffic to electronic jamming, since other measures would seem too aggressive.<sup>87</sup> A RAND study in the early 1960's noted, however, that the Soviets could try to force the cessation of air traffic to Berlin alone by demands for: (a) recognition of and negotiations with the GDR, and (b) landing of all aircraft at East German airfields for control purposes. Since ground traffic would continue, the risk of strong Western reaction would be lessened. Moreover, the Soviets could deter this reaction by threats to cut off ground access if the Western Allies did not submit to the air blockade.

Western power submission to an air blockade of Berlin would inflict a serious political defeat upon the West and strain the Allied resolve to uphold their rights in Berlin, as

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well as cast doubts in the minds of West Berliners and West Germans about the Western willingness to resist the Communist encroachments. Since the air route was the only way that many West Germans and West Berliners could avoid the East German checks while traveling to and from Berlin which could endanger their personal safety, an air blockade of Berlin would seriously affect West Berlin morale. It would also deter East German escapes to West Berlin, since air transportation would no longer be available to remove them to the safety of West Germany.

In the 1960's, for the first time in the twentieth century, the United States faced an adversary of nearly equal military strength and dealt with partners of equal economic strength.<sup>88</sup> The United States and its allies had pledged many times to defend West Berlin by force if necessary. They reaffirmed this policy during the Berlin crises of 1958 and 1961. United in this commitment, they were less unanimous about how it would be kept.

The crux of the Berlin problem from 1958 onward, therefore, existed not in terms of military capabilities but in terms of the determination of the Western allied governments to employ force to defend the West Berliners if need be, with all the grave and terrifying consequences implicit in this political decision. Thus, the key problem facing these governments was whether or not they could meet this commitment using only conventional rather than nuclear weapons.

In very general terms, NATO nations by 1961 had slightly more than 21 army divisions in Central Europe supported by about 2,500 combat aircraft under both NATO and national control. Some of these ground forces were fully mechanized. Their total capability was rated by some experts as being the equivalent of no more than 12 to 14 modern combat ready divisions. The US Army, Europe's five divisions together with the US Air Forces in Europe combat aircraft were considered as providing about one-half of NATO's actual ready fighting power in Central Europe.

Of the 23 Soviet combat ready divisions stationed in East Germany in 1961, some 10 were tank divisions with 10 others being mechanized divisions mounted on armored

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personnel carriers. In reserve in Eastern Europe and Western Russia were 50 Soviet divisions, plus 72 satellite nation divisions. Air support for these forces totalled about 5,000 combat aircraft under the control of the Soviet ground force commander.

In short, the ground combat power of the Red Army forces in Europe was at least twice that of the Western Alliance. Both the United States and Soviet forces possessed tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, but the NATO forces could not match the Red Army for a conventional war. Within the iron ring drawn about Berlin by the Soviet and East German military forces were about 10,000 soldiers of the three Western Allies. These garrisons existed only to preserve civil order in West Berlin and as a guarantee of the Western determination to defend the city.

The actions taken by the Kennedy Administration to bolster the United States military forces in 1961 represented not only a response to the Berlin crisis but also longer-range United States military concept changes already underway when the crisis flared up at Vienna. It seems clear that, without abandoning the implicit threat of nuclear retaliation to deter Soviet actions, and while seeking increased invulnerability for the strategic forces, the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations sought to develop other ways to apply the American military strength as a means of influencing the course of the dispute over Berlin. The Chief Executives apparently felt that the nuclear deterrent alone would not be effective in protecting the basic Western rights in Berlin, since the Soviet Bloc could always resort to minor, but progressive, moves that would make the use of nuclear weapons by the West appear unjustified.

In the interim, the construction of the wall dividing East and West Berlin during August 1961 was reminiscent of the way the Soviets achieved the original political division of the city in 1948, when the elected all-Berlin government was driven from the city hall in East Berlin by Communist mob action.<sup>89</sup> The full significance of this political split of Berlin in 1948 passed almost unnoticed in the drama of the Western effort to keep the blockaded city alive by airlift. Similarly, erection of the wall in 1961

appeared to be only another step in the de facto division of Berlin which had existed for 13 years.

But some observers believed that the Western failure to prevent this final destruction of the city's physical unity sounded the death knell of Berlin in the minds of most Germans and West Europeans. Shut off from East Germany by the wall, West Berliners and West Germans could no longer ignore the harsh realities opposing their intense desire for German reunification. Thus, the problem of Berlin in the mid-1960's became less how to defend West Berlin's freedom than how to save it from seemingly certain economic and political stagnation.

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## GLOSSARY

BASC	Berlin Air Safety Center
BCZ	Berlin Control Zone
CGSFG	Group Soviet Forces Germany
CINCUSAFE	Commander in Chief, United States Air Forces in Europe
CINCUSAREUR	Commander in Chief, US Army, Europe
DOD	Department of Defense
EAC	European Advisory Committee
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDR	German Democratic Republic
IFR	Instrument Flight Rules
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
KPD	German Communist Party
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
RIAS	Radio in the American Sector
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland
UN	United Nations
USA	United States Army
USAF	United States Air Force
USAFE	United States Air Forces in Europe
USAREUR	United States Army in Europe
USCINCEUR	United States Commander in Chief, Europe
USCOB	United States Commander, Berlin